INHERITANCE AND DOMINION

Volume 4

INHERITANCE AND DOMINION

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON DEUTERONOMY

Volume 4

GARY NORTH

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Inheritance and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Deuteronomy, Volume 4

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APPENDIX A

MODERN ECONOMICS AS A FORM OF MAGIC[1]

Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

NUMBERS 20:8

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

NUMBERS 20:11

In a previous situation, God had told Moses to strike a rock with his rod, and water would flow out of it (Ex. 17:6). This procedure had worked exactly as promised. Now, God's command was different: speak to a rock. In both cases, the Israelites would get what they wanted for no effort or payment on their part. Moses would pay the price—a below-market price by anyone's standards. His words would bring them God's supernatural blessing.

This time, Moses struck the rock twice. He made up a ritual of his own to substitute for God's explicit command to him. He hit the rock twice. The water flowed, just as it had at Marah, but this act of autonomy, lack of faith in God, and outright defiance against God's command cost Moses entrance into the Promised Land. "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12). In what did Moses' lack of faith consist? *He had substituted ritual magic for covenantal obedience*. He had imagined that a ritual—a formula of some kind—would enable Israel to gain supernatural blessings from

God.[2] Israel would get something for nothing. This plan worked for Israel, but Moses paid a heavy price.

God wanted to teach Israel a lesson, namely, that obedience to God's revealed word produces blessings in history, no matter how low the statistical probabilities of success appear to be. Moses substituted a different lesson: adherence to precise formulas is what produces blessings in history. This is the magician's worldview.

A. The Economist's Worldview

Economics is a highly rationalistic social science, if not *the* rationalistic social science. Economists do not recommend invoking supernatural forces as a means of explaining anything or changing anything. Economics is an entirely man-centered discipline. How, then, can it be considered magical? Because economists propose a worldview that insists that wealth-creation can take place, and does take place, by means of techniques and institutional arrangements that supposedly have no necessary connection to God's word. Economic theory substitutes formulas for biblical ethics in its explanation of how the world works.

The economist proposes the magician's quest: discovering the proper techniques for gaining external blessings apart from external conformity to the stipulations of God's specially revealed cross-boundary laws.[3] If wealth-creation is governed by social laws and techniques that are independent of ethics, then man can gain something valuable apart from the costs of obedience to God. This is also the magician's worldview. The magician seeks an arcane formula or procedure to invoke, or some other source of power over nature that he can manipulate to gain his ends, that does not ask him to change his commitment to his own self-centered ends. Modern economics is the academic incarnation of this outlook, an entire worldview that interprets most of society's operations in terms of men's individual solutions to one simple question: "What's in it for me?"

Post-Scholastic economics has generally asserted that wealth-creation is not a matter of ethics except insofar as a man's willingness to conform to certain behavior patterns increases the statistical probability of his gaining voluntary cooperation from others. Wealth-creation is seen as a matter of the efficient application of ethically neutral

2. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 11.

3. On cross-boundary laws, see Appendix J.

knowledge to the problems of scarcity. For the economist, the phrase, "honesty is the best policy," is epistemologically meaningful only if honesty can be shown statistically to earn a rate of return above the rate of interest obtainable by investing in "risk-free" short-term government debt.

Ever since the late seventeenth century, economics has rested self-consciously on the methodological assumption of agnosticism regarding God. It has sought to avoid any invocation of the authority of religion. Operationally, this agnosticism is atheism. This confessionally atheistic worldview was first extended into scholarship by the economists. William Letwin's book, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (1963), remains the most detailed study of this development. He wrote: "Nevertheless there can be no doubt that economic theory owes its present development to the fact that some men, in thinking of economic phenomena, forcefully suspended all judgments of theology, morality, and justice, were willing to consider the economy as nothing more than an intricate mechanism, refraining for the while from asking whether the mechanism worked for good or evil. That separation was made during the seventeenth century. . . . The economist's view of the world, which the public cannot yet comfortably stomach, was introduced by a remarkable *tour de force*, an intellectual revolution brought off in the seventeenth century."[4] He went on to assert that "the making of economics was the greatest scientific achievement of the seventeenth century."[5] While the development of Newtonian physics would seem to deserve that honor, there should be no question that scientific economics was the greatest atheistic intellectual achievement of the seventeenth century, retaining this title until Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871). Newton the physicist at least tipped his academic hat to a deistic unitarian god who sustained sufficient order in the cosmos to make applicable men's knowledge of mathematics. The economists, then as now, tipped their academic hats to no god at all.

Adam Smith seems to be an exception. He was a deist of some sort. This is clear from scattered passages in his book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). The book is barely known, rarely read, and never discussed in the textbooks as a contribution to economic thought. Smith made no analytical use of its vague theology in the *Wealth of Na-*

4. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Garden City, New York: Anchor, [1963] 1965), pp. 158–59. This book was published first by M.I.T. Press.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

tions (1776).[6] His famous "invisible hand"[7] was a mental construct, not a god. "The hand's going to get you" was not what he had in mind.

Economists ever since the late nineteenth century have proclaimed the ideal of value-free economics: economic science devoid of ethical content. They have to this extent become magicians. The magician seeks something for nothing by means of ritual formulas. The economist seeks ways for society to attain "more for less"[8] by means of insights generated by means of arcane mathematical formulas.

B. Equilibrium as Conceptual Magic

Modern economics assures us that a society can create wealth if it implements production techniques within a framework accurately described by a series of simultaneous equations. Léon Walras, a French economist living in Switzerland, in the 1870s described the market order in this way. Oskar Lange in the 1930s argued that socialist central planning could match the efficiency of the free market by adhering to such mathematical equations in a trial-and-error process.[9] These equations presume the economist's concept of equilibrium: a condition in which no further economic change is beneficial because all of the society's production opportunities have been maximized. It is a world without profit or loss, a world without mistakes.[10]

For this to take place at any point in history, all of the participants in a free market, or the central planners in a socialist economy, would have to possess perfect knowledge, including perfect knowledge of the future. *They must be omniscient*. Economists do not use such decidedly theological terminology when describing equilibrium. If they were more forthright about the presumptions of equilibrium theory, they would not be taken seriously by anyone outside of their profession. Roger Leroy Miller wrote in his textbook: "Equilibrium in any market is defined as a situation in which the plans of buyers and the plans of sellers exactly mesh, causing the quantity supplied to

6. Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), Appendix C.

7. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Cannan edition, p. 423. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty*Classics*, 1976), pp. 304–5.

8. More precisely, he seeks to obtain more value from a given cost of resource inputs, or a given value from less costly resource inputs.

9. See Oskar Lange and Fred M. Taylor, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1938] 1956), pp. 72–83. This essay first appeared in the Review of Economic Studies in 1937.

10. Israel M. Kirzner, *Market Theory and the Price System* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1963), pp. 246–49.

equal the quantity demanded."[11] Gwartney and Stroup agreed: "When a market is in equilibrium, there is a balance of forces such that the actions of buyers and suppliers are consistent with one another. In addition, when long-run equilibrium is present, the conditions will persist into the future."[12] How can such a meshing of plans occur? Through perfect forecasting: "In summary, an output rate can be sustained into the future only when the prior choices of decision-makers were based on a correct anticipation of the current price level."[13] The phrase "correct anticipation" has to be interpreted as "perfect foreknowledge," but the authors are too scientific to say this. Their peers know what they really *mean—equilibrium is an impossible condition to fulfill*—and the average student is not too inquisitive about the relationship between a theory based on human omniscience and details in the real world.

Edwin Dolan summarizes the professional economist's definition of the condition of economic equilibrium: "The separately formulated plans of all market participants may turn out to mesh exactly when tested in the marketplace, and no one will have frustrated expectations or be forced to modify plans. When this happens, the market is said to be in equilibrium."[14] E. H. Phelps writes in *The New Palgrave* (1987), the English-speaking economics profession's dominant dictionary: "Economic equilibrium, at least as the term has traditionally been used, has always implied an outcome, typically from the application of some inputs, that conforms to the expectations of the participants in the economy."[15] There seems to be perfect agreement here: a kind of theoretical equilibrium among economists. The definitions mesh.

So does their blandness. This textbook definition of equilibrium seems so subdued and uncontroversial, perhaps even plausible. The economists' language certainly gives the impression that equilibrium applies to a real-world phenomenon: "a situation in which the plans of buyers and the plans of sellers exactly mesh," "when a market is

11. Roger Leroy Miller, *Economics Today*, 5th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 49.

12. James D. Gwartney and Richard L. Stroup, *Economics: Public and Private Choice*, 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), p. 186.

13. *Ibid*., p. 187.

14. Edwin G. Dolan, *Basic Economics*, 2nd ed. (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden, 1980), pp. 44–45.

15. Edmund S. Phelps, "equilibrium: an expectational concept," in *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, eds. John Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan 1987), II, p. 177.

in equilibrium," and "the separately formulated plans of all market participants may turn out to mesh exactly when tested in the marketplace." We can almost visualize a dedicated student writing down the definition of equilibrium on an index card, to be filed away in a card box or electronic filing software until the night before the final exam, when the note will be retrieved and the definition filed for 24 hours in a much less reliable storage device.

Now, for the sake of argument, let me provide a somewhat more controversial though more complete definition of equilibrium:

> Equilibrium is the condition of the world economy which occurs whenever all three billion market participants on earth (not counting their non-participating children) have perfectly forecasted the supply-and-demand effects of all of the economic decisions of all of the other three billion economic decision-makers, so that their plans mesh perfectly without error. This is why there is no incentive for plan-revision. No one has anything more to sell at the existing prices, and everyone has purchased all that he wants at the existing prices, so prices will not change as a result of anyone's changing his mind. Equilibrium requires that every market participant forecast perfectly the economic future, which has therefore ceased to be uncertain. In short, equilibrium occurs whenever everyone on earth has previously attained what Christian theologians refer to as one of God's incommunicable attributes: *omniscience*.

This note card might generate a second reading, even the night before the final exam. Perhaps an A-level student might think to himself, "This economic condition does not seem altogether plausible." I would go so far as to suggest that even a few of the B-level students might wonder, at least briefly, whether this definition applies to the real world. The C-level students will surely do their best to commit the definition to memory, though without success. The others do not bother to use note cards.

Equilibrium as a concept applies only to a never-never land where men possess one of the attributes of God. This never-never land is the realm of simultaneous equations and the calculus, not people. Yet time and time again, we find economists seriously discussing a theoretical problem in economics as if this never-never land could conceivably occur in the real world. So, to put it as bluntly as I can, almost the entire academic economics profession has been involved in a self-conscious deception of new students and the general public. The economists have fooled lots of people, especially themselves.

B. Lange vs. Mises

Let us consider a real-world example of "applied equilibrium" thinking by economists, one which had considerable impact on the history of economic thought for half a century. This example comes from one of the most important debates in the history of economic thought. Ludwig von Mises argued in a 1920 essay that socialist economic calculation is impossible because of the absence of market prices; therefore, socialist planning is inherently irrational.[16] Oskar Lange responded in 1937: "Let us see how economic equilibrium is established by trial-and-error in a competitive market."[17] He asserted the ability of socialist central planners, in the absence of private ownership and private capital markets, to coordinate the economy by means of trial-and-error pricing.

1. A Communist's Theory

So confident was Lange in the real-world applicability of his solution that he began his book with a rhetorical dismissal of Mises that became far more familiar than the details of Lange's arguments. Socialists are beholden to Mises, he said, because Mises articulated the irrational calculation argument better than anyone else. "Both as an expression of recognition for the great service rendered by him and as a memento of the prime importance of sound economic accounting, a statue of Professor Mises might occupy an honorable place in the great hall of the Ministry of Socialization or of the Central Planning Board of the socialist state."[18] Less familiar is his Marxian follow-up: "[E]ven the sta[u]nchest of bourgeois economists unwittingly serve the proletarian cause."[19]

Lange was no vague socialist. He was a Communist. This made him unique on the University of Chicago economics faculty, 1938–45, which was generally free market-oriented. During World War II, he broke with the Polish government-in-exile in London, openly switching his allegiance to the Lublin Committee, sponsored by the Soviet Union. In 1944, he served as a diplomatic go-between for Roosevelt and Stalin in matters regarding post-war Polish borders and its gov-

16. Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth" (1920); reprinted in F. A. Hayek (ed.), *Collectivist Economic Planning* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, [1935] 1963), ch. 3.

17. Lange, *Socialism*, p. 65.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

ernment.[20] He renounced his United States citizenship in 1945 to become the Polish ambassador to the United States. In 1947, he returned to Poland to serve as an economist. In 1957, he was appointed chairman of the Polish Economic Council. Here is the kicker: he did not suggest the implementation of his 1937 solution to Mises' challenge. Instead, he appealed to the new god—the computer—to solve the problem of coordinating scarce resources. He died in 1965.[21] His abandonment in practice of his own suggested solution did not penetrate the thinking of the myriad of Mises' critics in the Western world, who continued to cite his 1937 essay as if it were gospel truth. In short, "Better to accept a defunct theory by a Communist planner in a poverty-stricken backward nation than to accept the legitimacy of a comprehensive theoretical criticism of socialism in general." Ironically, it was Poland that first broke loose from Soviet Communism's tyranny. The Solidarity labor movement understood that Communism cannot work—yes, even before certain best-selling Western economists did. The Poles began their high-risk protest against the USSR in 1981. Yet as late as 1989, Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Samuelson wrote in his best-selling economics textbook: "The Soviet economy is proof that, contrary to what many skeptics had earlier believed, a socialist command economy can function and even thrive."[22] That same year, the Soviet Union went bankrupt in full public view, and the Berlin Wall came down. In 1991, senior Soviet Communists folded up shop, looted ("privatized") the Party's funds, and publicly abandoned Communism.

2. Theory and Reality

The theoretical problem with Lange's appeal to trial-and-error as a means leading to equilibrium is that for equilibrium to occur, there must first be omniscience by the person or persons in charge of resource allocation. There is no need for trials because there is no possibility of errors by those who possess omniscience. Equilibrium is the negation of trial and error. Now, to be fair to Lange, he must have had in mind the argument that trial and error by socialist planners is as

20. "Oskar Ryszard Lange, 1904–1965," *History of Economic Thought Website*, New School of Social Research. See also: "Oskar R. Lange." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, September 28, 2020; bit.ly/LangeWiki.

21. Dolan, *Basic Economics*, p. 686.

22. Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus, *Economics*, 13th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), p. 837, cited in Mark Skousen, *Economics on Trial: Lies, Myths, and Realities* (Homewood, Illinois: Business One Irwin, 1991), p. 208.

efficient—no, more efficient—in reaching equilibrium than the profit-seeking decisions of resource owners. More equitable, too. Or, to paraphrase Orwell, "All equilibrium conditions are equal, but some are more equal than others." All we need to assume, as good socialists, is "freedom of choice in consumption and freedom of choice in occupation,"[23] and the central planners can bring equilibrium into existence as well as entrepreneurs can. In fact, better. "Once the parametric function of prices is adopted as an accounting rule, the price structure is established by the objective equilibrium conditions."[24] In short, what Mises and the Austrian school of economists always insisted is impossible in history—equilibrium conditions—Lange appealed to as the solution to the problem of socialist economic calculation.

For over half a century, this argument was accepted by most economists as a theoretically valid dismissal of Mises, i.e., Mises' theory of entrepreneurship in a world of economic uncertainty and subjectively imputed prices. Lange's argument was also, by implication, a dismissal of Frank H. Knight's 1921 classic, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*, which rested on the same theory of entrepreneurship that Mises offered.[25] Lange's proposed practical solution, which was never adopted by any socialist planning agency, was regarded by his academic peers as having solved the real-world problems raised by Mises. As socialist economist Robert Heilbroner admitted in 1990, the year after the Berlin Wall came down, and the year before the Soviet Union collapsed: "Fifty years ago, it was felt that Lange had decisively won the argument for socialist planning." It has turned out, Heilbroner belatedly admitted, that Lange was wrong, and "Mises was right."[26] Fifty years of criticism from a handful of free market economists that Lange's solution, based on equilibrium conditions, was no solution at all, in no way affected the thinking of the majority of academic economists.[27] This is not surprising. Academic economists were equally committed to equilibrium as a legitimate model with which to critique free market capitalism,[28] and so they refused to pay any atten-

23. Lange, *Socialism*, p. 72.

24. *Ibid*., p. 81.

25. Knight also taught at the University of Chicago.

26. Robert Heilbroner, "After Communism," *The New Yorker* (Sept. 10, 1990), p. 92.

27. Peter G. Klein, "Introduction," *The Fortunes of Liberalism: Essays on Austrian Economics and the Ideal of Freedom*, ed. Peter G. Klein, vol. IV of *The Collected Works of F. A.* Hayek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 10.

28. For example, the once-popular "perfect competition" model was used to show why capitalism fails in practice. But in the perfect competition model, there is no competition, since everyone is omniscient regarding the uses of scarce resources. See Israel

tion to Lange's critics.[29] What finally persuaded them was not Mises' arguments but socialism's visible irrationality: the bankruptcy of the Soviet-bloc nations.

Israel Kirzner argued that what is lacking in the neoclassical economics of Walras, Marshall, and their disciples is some means of explaining how equilibrium can occur, thereby giving life to the advanced textbook world of simultaneous equations. "However, when price is described as being above or below equilibrium, it is understood that a single price prevails in the market. The uncomfortable question, then, is whether we may assume that a single price emerges before equilibrium is attained. Surely a single price can be postulated only as the result of the process of equilibrium itself. . . . The procedure also assumes too much. It takes for granted that the market already knows when the demand price of the quantity now available exceeds the supply price. But disequilibrium occurs precisely because market participants do not know what the market-clearing price is."[30] This applies even more forcefully to Lange's socialist planning board. This line of argumentation, which is Mises' Austrian argument, undercuts Walras as well as Lange. The economics profession has not given this idea careful consideration in its journals and textbooks. Walras was the original spinner of invisible clothing for the emperors of economics. Emperors who wear invisible clothes prefer to keep clear-eyed critics away from their parades.

Invoking equilibrium when discussing economic policy-making is an exercise in conceptual magic. *Equilibrium rests on the assumption of the possibility of* ***mankind's simultaneous omniscience.*** Yet neoclassical economics, including Keynesianism, invokes the equilibrium concept continually.[31]

Kirzner's criticisms of E. H. Chamberlin in Kirzner, *Competition and Entrepreneurship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), chaps. 3, 4.

29. The most widely known response was by Hayek in *Economica* (1940); reprinted in F. A. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), ch. 9. The most detailed criticism was by the little-known economist, T. J. B. Hoff, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Society* (London: William Hodge & Co., 1949).

30. Israel M. Kirzner, *Perception, Opportunity, and Profit: Studies in the Theory of Entrepreneurship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 4–5.

31. The Austrians invoke it occasionally, but only as a mental construct. Mises called it the evenly rotating economy (E.R.E.). He used it only to prove that the interest rate is a universal phenomenon. One exception to this refusal to invoke equilibrium is Kirzner's 1963 discussion of perfect competition, which he said is impossible to attain. This appeared in his out-of-print upper division economics textbook, *Market Theory and the Price System*, pp. 108–109. He never revised this book to incorporate his later studies of entrepreneurship. For a critique of the E.R.E., see Gary North, *Sovereignty*

D. Economic Theory vs. Ethical Value

Ethical value is publicly stripped of all authority in modern economic theory.[32] Those few economists who have argued that value-free economic analysis is mythical have had almost no influence on the profession. If they have had any influence, this topic was not the area in which they established their reputations.[33] The one well-respected American economist who argued forcefully for the reintroduction of values into economic theory, Kenneth Boulding, was regarded as somewhat eccentric for promoting the idea that ethics should be incorporated into the tools of analysis.

Meanwhile, the use of high-level mathematics as a tool of theoretical analysis, especially since the days of Walras, reveals just how committed the economics profession is to arcane formulas. There is even an element of priestly ritual about this procedure. Liberal economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who spurned mathematics, formulas, and graphs throughout his career, once revealed a little-known side of the profession. The editors of the professional journals, which are the avenues of career advancement, play a game regarding the use of mathematics. "The layman may take comfort from the fact that the most esoteric of this material is not read by other economists or even by the editors who publish it. In the economics profession the editorship of a learned journal not specialized to econometrics or mathematical statistics is a position of only moderate prestige. It is accepted, moreover, that the editor must have a certain measure of practical judgment. This means that he is usually unable to read the most prestigious contributions which, nonetheless, he must publish. So it is the practice of the editor to associate with himself a mathematical curate who passes on this part of the work and whose word he takes. A certain embarrassed silence covers the arrangement."[34]

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and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), p. 449.

32. Walter A. Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics* (New York: Dutton, 1971), ch. 4.

33. Robert Heilbroner is a good example. His popular book on the history of economic thought, *The Worldly Philosophers*, is a standard text in both history and economics departments. It was assigned by the millions. But his essay on the impossibility of value-free economics was not published in an economics journal. Robert L. Heilbroner, "Economics as a 'Value-free' Science," *Social Research*, XL (1973), pp. 129–43; reprinted in William L. Marr and Baldev Raj (eds.), *How Economists Explain: A Reader in Methodology* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1982). The publisher did not bother to typeset this volume. It was written on a typewriter.

34. John Kenneth Galbraith, *Economics Peace and Laughter* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), p. 41n.

Outsiders are unaware of the massive deception that is now endemic within the academic economics profession.

E. Value Theory at an Epistemological Impasse

The attempt to create an economic science as devoid of value judgments or ethics as physics has led to a theoretical impasse. This impasse was first discussed in detail in the 1930s, but it is almost never mentioned today because it cannot be solved, given the presuppositions of modern economics. Economists in the 1870s[35] began to abandon classical economics' concept of objective economic value. They substituted individual value preferences for objective value. All economic value is imputed by individuals, modern economics insists.

If this is true, then in order to make any kind of policy recommendation, the economist must assume that the value preferences or value scales of individuals can be compared with each other. To say that a policy benefits a lot of people assumes that the economist can compare the value scales of all of these people, or at least a statistically valid sample of them (but how can we be sure it is valid?), as well as the value scales of those who are not benefitted by the policy. He must be able to total up benefits and costs. He must be able to aggregate individual value preferences. But this is impossible to do. *There can be no scientifically valid interpersonal comparison of subjective value*. This was Lionel Robbins' conclusion in 1932,[36] and while he partially recanted in 1938, he did not explain why he had been incorrect in 1932.[37]

There is no common scale of values in human action, economic or otherwise. There is no value *scale*. Scales are physical devices used by physicists and chemists. An idea of a "scale of values" is at best a useful teaching device. It is not only mythical, it is misleading if it is associated with actual measurement. It makes economics sound like a physical science. Individual value preferences can be ranked; they cannot be measured.[38] As for social value, it has no role to play in a

35. William Jevons, Carl Menger, and Léon Walras. Cf. Karl Pribram, *A History of Economic Reasoning* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), Part VI.

36. Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1932), ch. 6.

37. On his debate with Sir Roy Harrod in 1938, see North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5:C:1. Cf. Mark A. Lutz and Kenneth Lux, *The Challenge of Humanistic* Economics (Menlo Park, California: Benjamin/Cummings, 1979), pp. 83–87. These two authors were as little known as their publisher.

38. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama, Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), p. 258.

science that denies that it is possible to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. The problem, however, is that the concept of social value plays an enormous role in economics. Indeed, *economics as a social science is inconceivable apart from the concept of social value*. Economics without a concept of social value would be like physics without a concept of mass.

The quest for a value-free economic science is ultimately the quest for man's autonomy from God and His law. It is a quest for meaning apart from "thou shalt not." The socialist economist is less likely to indulge in this quest than the free market economist is, since he invokes the benefits and legitimacy of social justice despite all socialist economies' declining economic output. There are "higher values" than "mere statistical output," he insists. The state must redistribute resources in order to benefit the oppressed or whichever the favored group is. Theoretically speaking, a strictly value-free free market economist cannot respond to the socialist by appealing to the free market's *measurable efficiency* and growth without violating the principle of *individually imputed value*. There can be no scientifically valid measure of aggregate economic value, so there is no way to measure economic efficiency.[39]

This admission would undermine all discussions by economists of government economic policy. Neither the socialist economists nor the free market economists want to see this happen. To have lots of people understand that economists as scientists must remain mute in all government policy matters is not in the economists' personal self-interest. They might lose their jobs.

The economist pretends to pull a rabbit (a policy recommendation) out of an empty hat (value-free economics). But he put the rabbit in the hat before he went on stage. He has definite value preferences. His economic analysis will reflect this fact. He will defend or attack this or that government policy in terms of his preferences. He cannot do this as a scientist, given the impossibility of making interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. He does so as a self-interested propagandist who pretends to be a neutral scientist for the sake of being taken seriously by policy makers and voters. This kind of magic is prestidigitation. It is based on manipulation and illusion.

39. Murray N. Rothbard, "Comment: The Myth of Efficiency," in Mario Rizzo (ed.), *Time, Uncertainty, and Disequilibrium* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1979), p. 90. Cf. Gary North, *The Coase Theorem: A Study in Economic Epistemology* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), ch. 4.

Sometimes I think the primary victims of this illusion are the economists themselves, most of whom seem blissfully unaware of the epistemological subterfuge they are promoting.

F. The Trinity and Imputation of Value

Without the presupposition of an omniscient God who imputes value subjectively in terms of a scale of values, a God who can measure value scales and make interpersonal comparisons of men's subjective utility, there can be no economic science. Modern economic science rests unofficially on the assumption of collective value scales and preferences, and also their measurability, even though officially economists deny their existence. Economists must assume what they officially deny.

There must be socially objective value and a socially objective value scale if there is a legitimate economic evaluation of social policy. There must be a value scale undergirding every evaluation; that is what "evaluate" means. God's judgments are objective in the sense of being both eternal and historical. He brings visible judgments in terms of His law. These judgments are both objectively grounded and subjectively grounded in the fixed moral character of God: "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).[40] God knows objectively whatever He knows subjectively, and vice versa. In Him, both subjective value and objective value reside. They reside there personally, for God is personal.

A corollary to the doctrine of God as an imputing agent is this: if individual men were not made in God's image, imputing value in a creaturely fashion, there could be no economic science. Men can impute value only because God has already done so. An individual can make useful estimates of social costs and benefits only because God makes precise calculations of social costs and benefits.

Finally, there is this corollary: if men were not able to impute value corporately, even as the Triune God of the Bible imputes value corporately, there could be no social theory, including economic theory. There could be no epistemological basis for policy formation. Societies can make judgments corporately because God does. The doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of social theory.

This is all denied by the modern economist. Economics has adopted the confession of the magician, not in the sense of invoking the supernatural, but in the sense of attributing wealth-creation to val-

40. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

ue-free techniques governed by formulas. The socialist invokes state planning; the free market economist invokes private property. Both deny that wealth is the product of obedience to God's laws. >From economics, the original social science,[41] has come the confessional model of all the others: "There is no necessary and sufficient god but man, either individual or collective."

The right-wing Enlightenment began with the English Whigs' political protests against a state-established church, but the concept of an evolving autonomous social order was first articulated by the Scottish common-sense rationalists in the mid-eighteenth century. They described society as the result of human action but not of human design.[42] This model later served Erasmus Darwin and his grandson Charles as the model of biological evolution.[43]

The Scots' social model was a kind of secularized Presbyterianism: a bottom-up appeals court system. It was paralleled by Continental left-wing Enlightenment social theory, whose model was secularized Jesuitism: a top-down authoritarian order. Scottish moral philosophy replaced theology (eighteenth century). Then political economy replaced moral philosophy (nineteenth century). Finally, economics replaced political economy (twentieth century). With each step, economics has moved further away from any concept of a divinely sanctioned moral order.

Conclusion

Man lives in a world of imputed meaning, for he is a creature under God. God imputes original meaning and value to the creation. Man is God's subordinate, required by God to think his own thoughts after Him, in a law-abiding, creaturely manner. But this is both too much and too little for covenant-breaking man. He wants to be less than the image of God and more than the agent of God. If he is God's image, he is responsible to God. He wants autonomy from God; so, he subordinates himself to nature instead. Rejecting God's law as a guide to human action, he finds himself entrapped by impersonal forces, which are in turn governed by (or are they merely revealed

41. Political philosophy, as distinguished from political science, began its march into atheism with Machiavelli. But Machiavelli had no explicitly scientific pretensions.

42. F. A. Hayek, "The Results of Human Action but not of Human Design" (1967), in Hayek, *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), ch. 6.

43. The influence here was David Hume. Hayek, "The Legal and Political Philosophy of David Hume" (1963), *ibid*., p. 119n.

by?) impersonal formulas. Covenant-breaking man seeks out formulas as the pathways to wealth and power. Some people prefer astrological formulas; others prefer statistical averages. Fate or chance or an impersonal mixture of the two: Which will it be? "Get your bets down, gentlemen. The window is about to close."

But why do any of these formulas work? Consider mathematics, the most popular source of power-granting formulas in our day. Men master the discipline of mathematics in order to understand and control their world, rarely pausing to contemplate the utter unreasonableness of the fact that a mental construct that is governed exclusively by its own rules of logic nevertheless applies in so many powerful ways to the operations of the external world.[44]

Economics allows the use of higher mathematics as a tool of theoretical analysis only where equilibrium conditions exist, i.e., where one or more men are presumed to be omniscient. "Ye shall be as gods" is the applicable phrase here. Every other use of mathematics in economics is either a simplified hypothetical example of price ratios for the sake of teaching or else statistics applied to historical data. Yet modern economics is overwhelmingly mathematical in its formal presentations, as a survey of any three professional journals will prove (within a statistically acceptable range or error, of course) to skeptical readers.

Modern economics, the original strictly humanistic social science, cannot avoid these humanist antinomies. For example, in seeking autonomy from God, modern economists propose a world in which only individuals impute value to the creation. But then they find that these autonomous imputations cannot be aggregated: no common measure exists. It is impossible to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. So, policy-making on a scientific basis must logically be abandoned. But the economist does not want to abandon either science or policy-making, especially government policy-making, where the power is, or seems to be. So, he refuses to think about the logic of his position.

The economics profession is becoming ever more self-conscious in its quest for analytical tools that abandon any trace of ethics. Some economists are even bothered by the traditional concept of choice.[45]

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44. Eugene Wigner, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences," *Communications on Pure and Applied Mathematics*, 13 (1960), pp. 1–14. Wigner won the Nobel Prize in physics.

45. Most notable is Armen Alchian: "Uncertainty, Evolution, and Economic Theory"(1950), in *The Collected Works of Armen Alchian*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Fund, 2006), I, pp. 3–17.

They may adopt indifference curves as a way to avoid the more psychological, and therefore more scientifically suspect, concept of utility. But if acting man is truly indifferent between two possible outcomes, how can he choose? Will he stand motionless, like Buridan's ass, until the threat of deprivation pressures him to take action, at which point he abandons his indifference?[46]

Economists adopt cost curves, supply curves, all kinds of curves. But a curve is made up of infinitesimal points. Prices and quantities are described by curves as changing in infinitesimally small moves. Infinitesimal changes are not aspects of decision-making. But curves are subject to the calculus, which for the modern economist is surely a more important explanatory tool than human action is.

Economists rest their case for economics as a science on theoretical constructs that assume that man is omniscient. But there is no human choice in a world in which man knows outcomes; there are only responses.[47] Economists invoke complex mathematical formulas in their quest for knowledge and influence, while abandoning the idea of rational human choice. Armen Alchian, a free market economist of the Chicago School, writes: "The essential point is that individual motivation and foresight, while sufficient, are not necessary" for economic theory to be true.[48]

Step by step, humanistic economics is abandoning man. Economics substitutes a behaviorist concept of man for the decision-maker who inhabits the real world. Man disappears in the world of simultaneous equations. God is not mocked . . . not at zero price, anyway.

46. Murray N. Rothbard, "Toward a Reconstruction of Utility and Welfare Economics," in *On Freedom and Free Enterprise: Essays in Honor of Ludwig von Mises*, ed. Mary Sennholz (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 238.

47. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 249.

48. Alchian, "Uncertainty, Evolution and Economic Theory," in Alchian, *Economic Forces at Work*, p. 27.

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUALISM, HOLISM, AND COVENANTALISM

And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied…

DEUTERONOMY 8:13

The language of mathematics infuses Moses' discussion of Israel's blessings. This language points to objective wealth: the multiplication of valuable things. This raises a problem for economic theory. How is value measured? How is wealth measured? If value is objective, it can be measured, but modern economic theory officially places the individual's subjective valuation—economic imputation—at the heart of its theory of value. Subjective evaluations cannot be measured, even by those who make these evaluations. There is no objective value scale, either personally or interpersonally. Yet modern economists have been obsessed with the intellectual challenge of establishing reliable indexes of national wealth, prices, and corporate social utility. They have persuaded governments around the world to spend billions of dollars to collect economic data from private citizens and firms. In fact, this data collection has justified the establishment of government economic planning. Without statistics, government planners could not claim the ability to plan the economy.[1]

Humanist economic theory has been unable to resolve the dichot-

1. Murray N. Rothbard, "The Politics of Political Economists: Comment," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 74 (Nov. 1960). Rothbard, "Fact-finding is a proper function of government," *Clichés of Politics*, ed. Mark Spangler (Irvington, New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1994). The essay was first published in *The Freeman* in June, 1961: "Statistics: Achilles' Heel of Government." Cf. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 2:F.

omy between subjective value and objective value.[2] If value is imputed subjectively by an individual, it is impossible for another individual to measure objectively this value. In fact, it is impossible for the first individual to impute cardinal numbers to his own valuation. He can only establish an ordinal ranking of values: first, second, third, etc. As Rothbard wrote,

> It is important to realize that there is never any possibility of *measuring* increases or decreases in happiness or satisfaction. Not only is it impossible to measure or compare changes in the satisfaction of different people; it is not possible to measure changes in the happiness of any given person. In order for any measurement to be possible, there must be an eternally fixed objectively given unit with which other units may be compared. There is no such objective unit in the field of human valuation. The individual must determine subjectively for himself whether he is better or worse off as a result of any change. His preference can only be expressed in terms of simple choice, or *rank*. . . . There is no possible unit of happiness that can be used for purposes of comparison, and hence of addition or multiplication. Thus, values cannot be measured; values or utilities cannot be added, subtracted, or multiplied. They can only be ranked as better or worse.[3]

If this is true, then it is scientifically impossible to make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility. This was Lionel Robbins' assertion in 1932.[4] But if he was correct, then it is impossible for economists as scientists to make policy recommendations based on the superiority of one outcome to another. Roy Harrod pointed this out in a 1938 essay.[5] Robbins then capitulated, announcing that he did accept the legitimacy of idea of economic policy-making.[6] He never reconciled his two positions.[7] So far, neither has anyone else.

This is the problem of epistemological subjectivism and policy-making. It applies to every social science, not just economics. It is more obvious in economics, however. The economics profession

2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1982] 2012), ch. 5. Cf. North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1990] 2012), pp. 1093–1100. Appendix D:E.

3. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles*, 2nd ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, [1962] 2009), pp. 18–19.

4. Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (New York: St. Martins, 1932), p. 140.

5. R. F. Harrod, "Scope and Method of Economics," *Economic Journal*, XVLIII (1938), pp. 396–97.

6. Lionel Robbins, "Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility: A Comment," *ibid*. (1938), p. 637–39.

7. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion*, ch. 5:C:1.

systematically avoids discussing it. Economists dearly love their role as policy experts. They do not want to admit to their students, let alone to the general public, that the foundations of modern economics make such a role scientifically fraudulent.

B. Welfare Economics, Ethics, and Subjectivism

Whether we use the language of multiplication or the language of social utility, we are dealing with collectives. If we use such terminology to assert an increase in social wealth, we are aggregating individual utilities. But this procedure is illegitimate if economic value is exclusively subjective. Thus, we cannot move scientifically from the individual to the group on the basis of economic analysis. Conclusion: there is no such thing as scientific welfare economics.

1. Rothbard on Welfare Economics

Rothbard attempted to make this move in a 1956 essay. First, he denied the existence of total utility. "We must conclude then that *there is no such thing as total utility*; all utilities are marginal."[8] Second, he announced: "The problem of 'welfare economics' has always been to find some way to circumvent this restriction on economics, and to make ethical, and particularly *political*, statements directly."[9] Third, he stated that all ethical issues are imported from outside the discipline of economics.[10] Fourth, he asserted that all economic advising denies the ethical neutrality dictum.[11] Then how can an economist make any statement regarding social welfare? Only on one basis: if any change increases at least one person's utility and has not reduced any other person's utility. This is Pareto's unanimity rule.

There is one overwhelming objection to this rule: *the existence of envy*. If one person is made richer by some change in the economy, and another person resents this outcome, the benefit to the first person may be offset by the negative feelings of the second. Rothbard in 1956 acknowledged this as a theoretical problem, but then he dismissed it. Envy is strictly internal; it does not lead to action, and only action counts. "How do we *know* that this hypothetical envious one loses in utility because of the exchanges of others? Consulting his ver-

8. Murray N. Rothbard, "Toward a Reconstruction of Utility and Welfare Economics," in Mary Sennholz (ed.), *On Freedom and Free Enterprise: Essays in Honor of Ludwig von Mises* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 234.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

bal opinions does not suffice, for his proclaimed envy might be a joke or a literary game or a deliberate lie."[12] Conclusion: "We are led inexorably, then, to the conclusion that the processes of the free market always lead to a gain in social utility. And we can say this with absolute validity as economists, without engaging in ethical judgments."[13] So, there is an aggregate called social utility after all. We can postulate an increase in social utility whenever we can identify a voluntary exchange: two people are better off, and no one else is worse off, *just so long as there is no such thing as envy*. Rothbard imported an aggregate into his analysis, as all welfare economists must, and with welfare economics comes ethics—the end of value-free economics.

Unfortunately for the acceptability of this thesis, Rothbard later wrote a classic essay in 1971 on the importance of envy in society, especially as the basis of socialism.[14] By moving envy out of the realm of the merely hypothetical into the realm of the politically significant, Rothbard undermined his reconstruction of welfare economics. Envy *does* exist after all in the world of demonstrated preferences; it is a major foundation of socialism. Therefore, the economist who uses some version of Pareto's analysis—at least two market participants are better off, while no one is worse off—in order to prove an increase in social utility yet without invoking ethics, is deluding himself. He has imported ethics into economic analysis the moment the issue of envy is introduced. He has assumed that envy is ethically illegitimate. It must not be used to criticize any libertarian version of welfare economics which supposedly enables an economist to assert an increase of social utility based on the existence of voluntary exchanges. Ethics, in short, becomes determinative in "value-free" economic science. This hostility to envy as a legitimate aspect of economic analysis rests on an ethical foundation.

2. Kirzner on Welfare Economics

Three decades later, Israel Kirzner—a disciple of Mises and also a rabbi of Orthodox Judaism[15]—profusely praised Rothbard's 1956

12. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

13. *Idem*.

14. Rothbard, "Freedom, Inequality and the Division of Labor," *Modern Age* (Summer 1971); reprinted in Kenneth Templeton (ed.), *The Politicalization of Society* (Indianapolis, Indiana: LibertyPress, 1978), pp. 83–126. The essay was also reprinted as a monograph by the Mises Institute.

15. Economist Aaron Levine has referred to Kirzner as "Rabbi Dr. Israel Kirzner, Talmudist extraordinaire. . . ." Levine, *Free Enterprise and Jewish Law: Aspects of Jewish Business Ethics* (New York: KTAV, 1980), p. xi.

essay for its rejection of aggregates. "To attempt to aggregate utility is not merely to violate the tenets of methodological individualism and subjectivism (by treating the sensations of different individuals as being able to be added up); it is also to engage in an entirely meaningless exercise: economic analysis has nothing to say about sensations, it deals strictly with choices and their interpersonal implications."[16]

Kirzner rejected the idea of "Pareto optimality" because "a Pareto-optimal move is considered to advance the well-being of *society*—considered as a whole."[17] He was correct; this is exactly what Pareto optimality implies. But Rothbard's essay rested on Pareto optimality: two people being better off and no one else (except the envious, who were dismissed by definition) worse off. Kirzner completely missed the fundamental point—a highly non-individualistic point—of Rothbard's essay: social utility *is* an aggregate, and this aggregate can be said to increase only because of Pareto optimality. In the essay following Kirzner's, I set forth these challenges to Rothbard:

> If the economist cannot make interpersonal comparisons of subjective utility…as Rothbard insists, then how can he be certain that "the free market maximizes social utility"?[18] What is "social utility" in an epistemological world devoid of interpersonal aggregates?
>
> If "*in human action there are no quantitative constants*,"[19] and therefore no index number is legitimate,[20] then how can we say that monetary inflation produces price inflation? What is price inflation without an index number? What is an index number without interpersonal aggregation?
>
> If we cannot define "social utility," or price inflation, then how can we know that "money, in contrast to all other useful commodities employed in production or consumption, does not confer a social benefit when its supply increases"?[21] How can we legitimately say anything about the aggregate entity, "social benefit"?[22]

16. Israel M. Kirzner, "Welfare Economics: A Modern Austrian Perspective," in Walter Block and Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr. (eds.), *Man, Economy, and Liberty: Essays in Honor of Murray N. Rothbard* (Auburn, Alabama: Mises Institute, 1988), p. 79.

17. *Idem*.

18. Rothbard, *Power and Market: Government and the Economy* (Menlo Park, California: Institute for Humane Studies, 1970), p. 13. Reprinted in Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, p. 1065.

19. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, p. 845.

20. *Ibid*., pp. 845–46.

21. Rothbard, "The Case for a 100% Gold Dollar," in Leland B. Yeager (ed.), *In Search of a Monetary Constitution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 121.

22. Gary North, "Why Murray Rothbard Will Never Win the Nobel Prize!" in *Man, Economy, and Liberty*, p. 105.

Kirzner understood that these aggregates are illegitimate from the point of view of methodological subjectivism, and he refrained from arguing publicly as an economist for any social policy throughout his career. He saw that, in terms of pure subjectivism in economics, to discuss the concept of social choice is "to engage in a metaphor."[23] "To choose, *presupposes* an integrated framework of ends and means; without such a presumed framework allocative choice is hardly a coherent notion at all."[24]

Such a statement identifies Kirzner as a very precise follower of Mises and a less precise follower of Moses. Without the concept of *aggregate, corporate social curses and blessings*, there can be no national covenant between God and His people. Without the idea of a series of corporate covenants there could be neither Judaism nor Christianity. The covenants of Israel were *judicially objective*. To demonstrate this objectivity, God provided *objective economic blessings* that were visible to anyone who looked at the evidence.

> And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else (Deut. 4:37–39).

> And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full (Deut. 6:10–11).

> The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow (Deut. 28:9–12).

23. Kirzner, "Welfare Economics," p. 80.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

The consistent methodological subjectivist refuses to see with his own eyes. He does not acknowledge the scientific relevance of either corporate blessings or corporate cursings. This was Israel's problem in Isaiah's day.

> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land (Isa. 6:8–12).

Such blindness is *judicial blindness*. God blinds men so that they cannot see with their own eyes. Judicial blindness is a mark of His covenantal curse. Men interpret what they see in terms of what they believe, and what covenant-breakers believe is that God does not bring corporate, objective, measurable, covenantal sanctions in history.

Kirzner rejected classical economics in the name of subjectivism. He therefore rejected biblical economics in the name of subjectivism. For methodological subjectivism, there is no such thing as national wealth, economically speaking, for there is no collective. If nation A is devastated by a plague, leaving behind only one alcoholic survivor who now owns the contents of every liquor store in the nation, while nation B has not suffered such a plague, there is no way for a subjectivist economist to say which nation is now better off. The alcoholic is clearly a happy man. Who is to say scientifically that the collective joy of nation B, which avoided the plague, is greater than the collective joy of nation A, i.e., the drunk who is feeling no pain? There is no such thing as collective joy, says the methodological subjectivist. In Kirzner's words, "economic analysis has nothing to say about sensations." Contrast this with Moses' economic analysis: "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17).[25] Moses spoke this to the assembled nation, not to a private individual.

Moses was raising the question that fascinated Adam Smith: the origin of the wealth of nations. Kirzner dismissed this whole question as epistemologically misguided.

25. Chapter 21.

> During the period of classical economics it was, of course, taken for granted that a society was economically successful strictly insofar as it succeeded in achieving increased wealth. Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* expressed this approach to the economics of welfare simply and typically. It was taken for granted that a given percentage increase in a nation's physical wealth (with wealth often seen as consisting of bushels of 'corn') meant a similar percentage increase in the nation's well-being. From this perspective a physical measure of a nation's wealth provides an index of that nation's economic success, regardless of its distribution. A bushel of wheat is a bushel of wheat. Clearly this notion of welfare offends the principles of methodological individualism and subjectivism; it was swept away by the marginalist (subjectivist) revolution of the late nineteenth century.[26]

But Smith's perception of objective national wealth was closer to the covenantal wisdom of the Bible than radical subjectivism is.[27]

By stripping all traces of objective value theory out of economics, radical subjectivism produces an intellectual world of sustained incoherence. A handful of academic economists have trained themselves to dismiss the visibly obvious as epistemologically irrelevant.[28] Their academic peers do not go along with them, but they also do not offer refutations of this epistemological nihilism that are based on epistemological subjectivism/individualism.

B. Dualism: Objective vs. Subjective Economics

I am not speaking here of Kant's dualism between the realm of man's mind and the realm of physical causation.[29] Mises, as a good Kantian,

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26. Kirzner, "Welfare Economics," p. 78.

27. The phrase "radical subjectivism" is Ludwig Lachmann's. He claimed in 1982 that radical subjectivism "inspired the Austrian revival of the 1970s…." Ludwig M. Lachmann, "Ludwig von Mises and the Extension of Subjectivism," in Israel M. Kirzner (ed.), *Method, Process, and Austrian Economics: Essays in Honor of Ludwig von Mises* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 37. Lachmann was being simultaneously overly modest and overly arrogant. It was his lectures in defense of radical subjectivism at the 1974 South Royalton, Vermont, conference (which I attended) that split the Austrian movement into the Rothbardian and Lachmanian camps. Radical subjectivism was surely an aspect of the revival of Austrian economics, for it split the movement into two irreconcilable factions. Radical subjectivism was hardly basis of Austrianism's revival. Lachmann also invoked the economics of "Shackle, the master subjectivist" (p. 38). But Shackle was never an Austrian School economist. Lachmann pretended otherwise. See Lachmann, "From Mises to Shackle: An Essay on Austrian Economics and the Kaleidic Society," *Journal of Economic Literature*, XIV (March 1976). In the history of economic thought, G. L. S. Shackle is the most consistent defender of Kant's noumenalism as an economic methodology. I regard Kirzner's theory of entrepreneurship as Lachmanian.

28. In short, says the economist, "Your facts cannot be sustained by economic theory."

29. Richard Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1914] 1956).

acknowledged the legitimacy of this dualism.[30] I am speaking here of the dualism between aggregative, objective value theory and individualistic, subjective value theory.

The epistemological problem with all forms of welfare economics and all forms of economic policy-making is the problem of reconciling *aggregative values or preferences*, whose existence is denied by extreme economic individualists, yet also invoked by them at some point, and *subjective values*, which are dismissed as morally peripheral by methodological holists, but which are also invoked by them at some point. This topic is avoided like the plague within the economics profession, since there has never been a widely agreed-upon humanistic solution to this dualism.

1. Indeterminacy

The methodological individualist moves epistemologically toward complete *indeterminacy*. There is no explainable continuity between the external world and the world of subjective evaluation. The momentary subjective states of the individual are said to lose contact with the external world and even with his own previous subjective states.[31] This epistemological indeterminacy was named by the radical subjectivist economist, Ludwig Lachmann: *kaleidic perceptualism*. He self-consciously invoked as his image of society the child's toy, the kaleidoscope.[32] A kaleidoscope is a tube that uses mirrors to produce ever-changing, unrepeatable, visually fascinating, and *conceptually meaningless* patterns out of shifting, colored pieces of glass.

For Lachmann, and also for Kirzner, it is illegitimate to speak of national economic growth or per capita economic growth.[33] Yet Mises argued to the contrary: "Saving, capital accumulation, is the agency that has transformed step by step the awkward search for food on the

30. Ludwig von Mises, *Theory and History: An Interpretation of Social and Economic Evolution* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 1.

31. Lachmann wrote: "The human mind can, it is true, transcend the present moment in imagination and memory, but the moment-in-being remains nevertheless always *self-contained* and *solitary*. . . . It follows that it is impossible to compare human actions undertaken at different moments in time." Ludwig M. Lachmann, *Capital, Expectations, and the Market Process* (Kansas City, Kansas: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1977), p. 83.

32. Ludwig Lachmann, "An Austrian Stocktaking: Unsettled Questions and Tentative Answers," in Louis Spadaro (ed.), *New Directions in Austrian Economics* (Kansas City, Kansas: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1978), p. 7. This book might well have been titled *Kaleidic Developments in Austrian Economics*, or perhaps *The Epistemological Breakdown of Austrian Economics*.

33. Ludwig Lachmann, *Capital and Its Structur*e (Kansas City, Kansas: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1977), p. 37.

part of savage cave dwellers into modern ways of industry."[34] For the radical subjectivist, it is illogical to argue that an increase in per capita capital leads to greater per capita wealth. Per capita capital is "a wholly artificial construct," wrote Kirzner.[35] Yet Mises argued: "There is but one means available to improve the material conditions of mankind: to accelerate the growth of capital accumulated as against the growth in population. The greater the amount of capital invested per head of the worker, the more and the better goods can be produced and consumed."[36] Mises' original radical subjectivism has run aground on the shoals of a far more radical subjectivism. The result of pure subjectivism is the end of meaning, not just for economics but for human thought in general. It destroys continuity: through time and between individuals.

2. Central Planning

In contrast, the methodological holist moves toward central planning. The concept of social goods and social evils implies a single planning mind and a single standard of good and evil. This is what alienates the individualists. They want to preserve human freedom; the holist wants to improve the human condition systematically, meaning through central planning and coercion. The individualist does not trust the state; the holist does not trust the free market. The individualist rejects state compulsion; the holist rejects social and even personal indeterminacy, which radical subjectivists such as Lachmann preach with fervor. The individualist wants the consumer to be sovereign; the holist wants the voter or bureaucrat to be sovereign. The individualist defends the sovereignty of individual plans; the holist defends the sovereignty of the state's plan.

The individualist proclaims faith in the rationality of the market and its ability to improve the human condition. He then denies the epistemological legitimacy of any objective unit of measurement that would allow an outside observer to assess such improvement. In contrast, the holist proclaims faith in the rationality of the state and its ability to improve the human condition. He then denies the appropriateness of any unit of measurement that points to the failure of central planning to deliver the goods. Denying the relevance of socialism's

34. Ludwig von Mises, *The Anti-Capitalist Mentality* (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 39.

35. Israel M. Kirzner, *An Essay on Capital* (New York: Augustus Kelly, 1966), p. 120.

36. Mises, *Anti-Capitalist Mentality*, p. 5.

objective failure, he proclaims his faith in intangible socialist goods that provide dignity and meaning in socialism's world of stagnant or declining economic output. Both the individualist and the holist seek justification in a hypothetical realm of the spirit—Kant's noumenal realm—which lies outside the domain of objective measurement, i.e., Kant's phenomenal realm. In search of meaning, members of both schools of economic thought flee to the zone of man's indeterminate subjective freedom: Kant's noumenal realm. The holist seeks justification for his views in terms of the collective "quality of life," which cannot be scientifically measured. The individualist seeks justification for his views in terms of the individually perceived productivity of the entrepreneurial flash of insight, which cannot be measured, taught, or even described scientifically.[37]

C. Resolution: Methodological Covenantalism

The methodological covenantalist finds the solution to these inherent and permanent dualisms in the concept of a sovereign, omniscient God. God has a plan. He matches ends and means. He issues a decree for history, and this decree will be fulfilled. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35). The presupposition of a sovereign God replaces the presupposition of sovereign man.

To the extent that men think God's thought after Him, they adopt God's standards—His *hierarchy of legitimate ends*—with respect to their lives. God enables people to coordinate their plans through human action because His decree and plan are above theirs. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps" (Prov. 16:9). "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he tur-

37. Kirzner's entrepreneurial "ah, ha," alertness, or hunch is the premier example of this flight to the noumenal in search of explanations. He called entrepreneurial alertness "the *instant* of an entrepreneurial leap of faith. . . ." Kirzner, *Perception, Opportunity, and Profit: Studies in the Theory of Entrepreneurship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 163. This moment of discovery is beyond the constraints of logical cause and effect. "Once the entrepreneurial element in human action is perceived, one can no longer interpret the decision as merely calculative—capable in principle of being yielded by mechanical manipulation of the 'data' or already *completely implied* in these data." Kirzner, *Competition and Entrepreneurship* (University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 35. He spoke of the entrepreneur's "propensity to sense what prices are realistically available to him" (p. 40). The essence of this sense is that it is beyond calculation, i.e., beyond Kant's phenomenal realm.

neth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21:1). In Joseph's words to his brothers, who had sold him into slavery, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). God's law-order provides the framework of productive coordination, in economics as in other areas of life. His sanctions in history provide both the incentives and disincentives that confirm His covenant law.

The methodological individualist does not begin with the methodological covenantalist's presupposition of an omniscient God. Such a God would thwart the individualist's autonomy. Neither does the methodological holist begin with God; he begins with some substitute source of planning and accurate information, most commonly the state. The idea of cosmic personalism is foreign to humanistic economics.[38] Economics since the late seventeenth century has been self-consciously agnostic,[39] i.e., militantly atheistic with a thin veneer of humility for academic propriety's sake. The result is epistemological chaos, which is concealed from public view, even from the occasionally inquisitive eyes of graduate students, by a kind of embarrassed silence. Should anyone enquire about this epistemological dualism, he will be assured that such matters are irrelevant to what economists do. And what do economists do? Economics. Then what is economics? Whatever economists do. (These definitions were offered, respectively, by Jacob Viner and Frank Knight.)

Conclusion

The Bible's objective language of national wealth undermines methodological individualism. But rarely do methodological individualists pursue their position to its logical conclusion. The language of statistical averages and price indexes is common to most methodological individualists.

Because biblical cosmic personalism is true, there can be a resolution to the philosophical problem of the seeming contradiction between subjective and objective knowledge. In economics, this contradiction is seen most clearly in the debates over objective and subjective value. The Bible's objective value theory is grounded in the objective Person of God—His declarations, standards, and eval-

38. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 1.

39. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1963).

uations. God's subjective declaration of value to His objective creation—"it is good"—and His objective declarations of blessings and cursings in history indicate that subjectivism and objectivism are correlative. They are grounded in the objective character of God's subjective declarations. The mind of man is capable of making objective evaluations of external conditions because his mind reflects God's mind. He is made in God's image. His evaluations become progressively accurate as they approach God's evaluations as a limit. He thinks God's thought after Him.

There is corporate wealth. Men can subjectively perceive objective differences between rich and poor nations, rich and poor corporations, and rich and poor governments. I can remember being challenged verbally by Mises in the fall of 1971 to defend my statement that we can make objectively meaningful comparisons between subjectively perceived human conditions. I said, "It is better to be rich and healthy than it is to be poor and sick." He said, "Yes, that's so." This was not a great philosophical exchange, but it got to the point. That point was not noumenal.

APPENDIX C

SYNCRETISM, PLURALISM, AND EMPIRE

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

DANIEL 2:40–45

Daniel's prophecy to Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar foretold the rise of a series of empires. The last worldwide political empire would be Rome's. It would break apart. It would be replaced by a new empire, a new world order: the church, the stone cut from the mountain made without hands. There is no political empire capable of replacing the church as the basis of an integrated world order. Every self-proclaimed new world order will fail.

In our day, we have seen two rival claimants to the throne of empire, each claiming to be a builder of a New World Order: international Communism and Western humanism. Soviet Communism visibly collapsed in 1991. Today, Western humanists believe that they

are capable of putting together an international order based on free trade, central banking, currency manipulation, and international bureaucratic agencies with the power to control the legal framework of international production. This ideal, like the ideal of Communism, will smash on the rocks of economic efficiency. This ideal is built on faith in political controls, which today means faith in central banking, taxation, and computers.[1]

A. A Common Pantheon

The strategy of the ancient empires was syncretism: the fusion of competing religious faiths. It still is, but today it is called pluralism. The idols of the conquered cities could be brought into the pantheon of the empire's gods. This was Rome's strategy. Local idols lost their exclusivity when they entered the empire's pantheon. Rome sought to maintain the regional authority of the gods of the classical city-state by incorporating them into the Roman pantheon. By honoring the geographical significance of local deities, Rome sought to subordinate them all to the pantheon itself, i.e., to the empire. The Roman pantheon ("all gods"), manifested politically by the genius and later the divinity of the emperor, universalized the implied divinity of the classical city-state.

It was the exclusivity and universalism of the God of the Bible that identified Jews and Christians as politically untrustworthy and even revolutionary subjects. They refused to worship either the genius or the divinity of the Roman emperor. They would not acknowledge the authority of the Roman empire's pantheon of gods. They would not acknowledge the God of the Bible as just one more regional god among many. The God of the Bible, they insisted, was above the creation and outside it. This confession was revolutionary in ancient Rome. Rushdoony explained why:

> The essence of the ancient city-state, polis, and empire was that it constituted the continuous unity of the gods and men, of the divine and the human, and the unity of all being. There was thus no possible independence in society for any constituent aspect. Every element of society was a part of the all-absorbing one. Against this, Christianity asserted the absolute division of the human and the divine. Even in the incarnation of Christ, the human and the divine were in union without confusion, as Chalcedon [451 A.D.] so powerfully defined it. Thus, divinity was withdrawn from human society and returned to the heavens and to God. No human order

1. The international financial crisis that began in late 2008 has yet to be resolved.

> or institution could claim divinity and thereby claim to represent total and final order. By de-divinizing the world, Christianity placed all created orders, including church and state, under God.[2]

The Roman Empire could not coexist with Christianity. The Roman authorities recognized this fact over two centuries before the Christians did. While Christians were honest, hard-working, peace-loving citizens, they were necessarily the enemies of pagan Rome. Their God would not submit; He ordered His people not to submit. The Christians sought peace through religious pluralism, but Rome sought dominion through syncretism: the absorption of all religions into the religion of empire. Syncretism is the enemy of orthodoxy. Political pluralism—the equal authority (little or none) in civil law of all supernatural gods—is a grand illusion. But Christian believers generally have not yet recognized in political pluralism the syncretism that underlies it and the humanistic empire which is pluralism's long-term goal.[3]

Christians under Roman rule called for religious toleration—the right not to worship the emperor as a condition of citizenship or even resident alien status—but Rome's authorities knew better. They recognized what early Christians refused to acknowledge, namely, that the God of the Bible recognizes no other gods, rejects syncretism, and therefore calls for the subordination of culture to Him and His Bible-revealed law. Rome recognized early that pluralism is a politically convenient short-term illusion and a long-run impossibility. There would either be a judicially impotent Christian establishment under the authority of a political priesthood or else covenant religion would govern the nation's political oath of allegiance. The result of this early recognition was Rome's intermittent persecution of Christians for almost three centuries, followed by the fall of Rome and the inheritance of Rome's infrastructure—roads, laws, and customs—by Christians in the fourth century. Rome's syncretism failed as surely as the Christians' early pluralism failed.

B. Tertullian's *Apology*

In the late second or early third century, Tertullian (145–220), the intellectual founder of Latin Christianity, wrote his famous *Apology*, a defense of Christianity as a pietistic religion of heart and hearth

2. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1971] 2007), p. 131.

3. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

which should have been acceptable to Rome's power religion. It was addressed to "Rulers of the Roman Empire. . . ."[4] It was a critique of Rome's demand that Christians must worship the divinity of the emperor for the sake of the prosperity of the empire.

He attributed to ignorance the rulers' hostility to Christianity. "So we maintain that they are both ignorant while they hate us, and hate us unrighteously while they continue in ignorance, the one thing being the result of the other either way of it."[5] In chapter 25, he pointed out that the complex pantheon of Rome in his day had not been the religion of the early Romans. "But how utterly foolish it is to attribute the greatness of the Roman name to religious merits, since it was after Rome became an empire, or call it still a kingdom, that the religion she professes made its chief progress! Is it the case now? Has its religion been the source of the prosperity of Rome?" On the contrary, he argued: "Indeed, how could religion make a people great who have owed their greatness to their irreligion? For, if I am not mistaken, kingdoms and empires are acquired by wars, and are extended by victories. More than that, you cannot have wars and victories without the taking, and often the destruction, of cities. That is a thing in which the gods have their share of calamity. Houses and temples suffer alike; there is indiscriminate slaughter of priests and citizens; the hand of rapine is laid equally upon sacred and on common treasure. Thus the sacrileges of the Romans are as numerous as their trophies."[6] The sacredness of Rome's pantheon of gods is an illusion; the gods of Rome are idols. "But divinities unconscious are with impunity dishonored, just as in vain they are adored."[7]

If this was calculated to persuade Rome's rulers, it was an apologetic failure. Tertullian did not understand, or pretended not to understand, the inherently political nature of classical religion. The gods of Rome were thoroughly political in Tertullian's era. This is not surprising. In classical religion, the gods of allied cities, as well as allied families and clans within a city, had always been political. They had always been creations for the sake of politics.[8] Peace treaties

4. Tertullian, *Apology*, ch. I, opening words. Reprinted in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1870] 1978), III, p. 17.

5. *Idem*.

6. *Ibid*., p. 40.

7. *Idem*.

8. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1864] 1955), Book III, ch. VI.

between warring cities were treaties between their gods.[9] While the ancients believed that the gods did bring sanctions, positive and negative, in history, they also believed that these sanctions were applied to members of oath-bound, custom-bound, and ritual-bound groups: families, clans, and city-states. The heart of Roman religion was its public piety.[10] Jews and Christians remained aloof from these public ceremonies, not because the rituals were public, but because they formally invoked idols. On the other hand, they were persecuted, not because they refused to believe in the power of idols, but because they refused to participate in acts of public piety. *The judicial issue for Rome was the oath—formal invocation—not personal belief*. The public oath affirmed men's obedience to representatives of the gods of the pantheon—representatives who were, above all, political agents of the emperor.

In chapter 28, Tertullian called for religious toleration generally, affirming strict voluntarism in worship. Christians cannot in good conscience "offer sacrifice to the well-being of the emperor." Yet for this refusal, he complained, they have been illegitimately condemned as treasonous. Roman religion was itself sacrilegious, he said, "for you do homage with a greater dread and an intense reverence to Caesar, than Olympian Jove himself."[11] Of course they did; the Olympian Jove was a political construct. Caesar was the earthly manifestation of Rome's political power, and classical religion was power religion. Tertullian sought to condemn Rome's rulers for "showing impiety to your gods, inasmuch as you show a greater reverence to a human sovereignty than you do to them."[12] His strategy was naive; the heart of all power religion, from Pharaoh to the latest political messiah, is the honoring of human sovereignty.[13]

In chapter 29, he argued that the gods of Rome did not protect Caesar; rather, Caesar protected the gods. "This, then, is the ground on which we are charged with treason against the imperial majesty, to wit, that we do not put the emperors under their own possessions; that we do not offer a mere mock service on their behalf, as not be-

9. *Ibid*., III:XV.

10. Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 64.

11. *Ibid*., p. 41.

12. *Idem*.

13. Gary North, *Authority and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Exodus* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), Part 1, *Representation and Dominion* (1985).

lieving their safety rests in leaden hands."[14] This was also a naive argument, yet one still revered by most Christian defenders of modern political pluralism. To pray publicly for Caesar in the name of the pantheon of Rome's gods was to acknowledge that Caesar was the common reference point, the common spokesman, for the inherently political gods of classical culture.

The syncretism of Rome's religion was the theological justification for the administration of Rome's political empire: a hierarchy of sanctified power from Caesar to the lowest officials in the otherwise autonomous city-states that made up the empire. This hierarchy of power was sacred, a matter of formal ritual.

The source of law in society is its god.[15] Caesar was the source of law in the name of the gods of the pantheon. There was no operational hierarchy above him; there was a political and military hierarchy below him. This much Tertullian understood. This was the heart of his argument against the seriousness of Roman religion. But to maintain widespread faith in the legitimacy of any social order, the authorities must foster faith in a sacred—though not necessarily supernatural—law-order, i.e., laws to which non-political and cosmic sanctions are attached. Civil authorities seek to instill the fear of the society's gods in the hearts of the subjects of the sacred political order. This is why Tertullian was unquestionably treasonous, for he was undermining men's faith in the higher order which the authorities insisted undergirded Rome's legitimacy. Tertullian was challenging the civil covenant of Rome, an overwhelmingly political social order. He challenged Rome's gods, the authority of Rome's rulers to command allegiance to the primary representative of these gods, Rome's law, Rome's sanctions against treasonous Christians, and ultimately Rome's succession in history. There was no more revolutionary act than this. Taking up weapons was a minor infraction compared to this.

In vain did Tertullian cry out for toleration, just as modern Christian defenders of political pluralism cry out vainly. "Why, then, are we not permitted an equal liberty and impunity for our doctrines as they have, with whom, in respect of what we teach, we are compared?"[16] The answer should have been obvious: they—the tolerated

14. Tertulian, *Apology*, pp. 41–42.

15. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 5.

16. Tertullian, *Apology*, ch. XLVI, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, p. 50.

religions—publicly acknowledged the legitimacy of the covenant of Rome's power religion. Christianity could not acknowledge such legitimacy and remain faithful to God.

Tertullian had mystical tendencies, and he spent the end of his life as a member of a cult, the Montanists, which had been founded half a century earlier by a tongues-speaking, self-styled prophet, Montanus, and two women who were also said to be prophetesses. They taught the imminent bodily return of Christ.[17] After Christ's bodily return, they taught, He would set up an earthly kingdom.[18] Tertullian's *Apology* was governed by an outlook hostile to time, dominion, and political involvement. His political pluralism was an outworking of his theological pietism, a pietism which eventually led him into a premillennial cult that called for asceticism, suffering, and martyrdom prior to the imminent Second Coming.[19] His political pluralism was consistent with his later theology: a call, not for the victory of Christianity in history, but merely for peace until such time as Christ returns to set up a millennial kingdom. For Tertullian, history offered little hope. Yet even so, his limited critique of Rome in the name of political pluralism and toleration went too far for Rome's hierarchs.

C. Julian the Apostate

The Roman authorities understood the implications of the rival religion which Tertullian preached. They were unimpressed with his arguments that Christians were the best citizens of Rome because they gave alms freely and paid their taxes.[20] The Christians were by far the most dangerous citizens of Rome, as the last pagan emperor Julian (361–63) fully understood. The victorious Christians designated him posthumously as "Julian the Apostate." This name has stuck, even in textbooks written by his spiritual heirs. A secret convert from Christianity to occult mysteries at age 20, Julian took steps to weaken the Christians immediately after he attained the office of Emperor. Julian was the first Renaissance ruler, a lover of Greek antiquity.[21] He concealed his conversion to paganism throughout his adult life until he gained uncontested political power in 361. This is understandable,

17. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1953), p. 128.

18. W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), p. 254.

19. W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, [1965] 1981), p. 292.

20. *Apology*, ch. XLII, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, p. 49.

21. Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, p. 171.

given the fact that his late cousin, the Arian Emperor Constantius, had ordered the murder of Julian's father and mother in the year Constantine died, 337, when Julian was five years old.[22] There was great resentment in Julian.

One of his earliest acts as emperor was to establish pagan review boards governing the appointment of all teachers. Teachers henceforth would have to teach classical religion along with traditional rhetoric.[23] Christians, however, were forbidden by Julian to teach such texts. He understood the social authority of formal education. He dismissed the Christians in his work, *Against the Galileans*: "It seems to me that you yourselves must be aware of the very different effect of your writings on the intellect compared to ours, and that from studying yours no man could achieve excellence or even ordinary human goodness, whereas from studying ours every man can become better than before."[24] As is true today, the possession of a formal education was basic to social advancement.[25] Christians had long understood this, and those seeking social advancement had capitulated to the requirement of mastering rhetoric, but in a watered-down, minimal-paganism form. Wilken writes: "For two centuries Christian intellectuals had been forging a link between Christianity and the classical tradition, and with one swift stroke Julian sought to sever that link. . . . Christian parents, especially the wealthy, insisted that their sons receive the rhetorical education, and it now appeared as though Julian were limiting this to pagans."[26] The more things change, the more things stay the same.[27] What Julian attempted, the United States Department of Education has achieved.[28] So have other similar politically appointed and coercive review boards throughout the world.

In a very real sense, Julian's edict launched a dilemma that has faced the Western church since the eleventh century. If the knowledge of pagan texts is the legitimate basis of a gentleman's education—an

22. John Holland Smith, *The Death of Classical Paganism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), p. 93.

23. Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, pp. 173–74.

24. Cited in Smith, *Death of Classical Paganism*, p. 109.

25. Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, p. 175.

26. *Idem*.

27. Marsden, *Soul of the American University*, op. cit.

28. Only in the summer of 1995 did the United States Department of Education allow a non-regional accrediting organization begin to offer accreditation to colleges. The regional associations are all secular. The new association is equally secular, but its recommended curriculum is more traditional, rather like late-nineteenth-century pagan college education.

assumption acknowledged by the Christian West until the Darwinian educational reforms of late nineteenth century—then why should Christians seek to become gentlemen? Why should they not content themselves with the study of the Scriptures and commentaries on the Scriptures, just as Jewish scholars in the West contented themselves for eighteen centuries with the study of the Talmud? One answer: because Christians do not want to live in ghettos, having seen what ghetto living did to the Jews prior to about 1850. On the other hand, won't exposure to classical learning undermine Christians' commitment to the truths of Scripture, just as secular education has undermined modern Judaism? We see this continuing debate in Christians' rival commitment to two forms of higher education: (1) the Christian liberal arts college, which has unquestionably gone increasingly humanistic and liberal;[29] and (2) the fundamentalist Bible college, which does not seek academic accreditation from state-licensed, monopolistic, humanistic accreditation organizations, nor would receive it if sought. This is the dilemma of the hypothetical but non-existent Christian law school that would teach biblical law and which therefore could not receive academic accreditation from the humanistic American Bar Association (ABA), which is mandatory for a school's graduates to gain access to the state-licensed monopoly of pleading the law for money.[30] Darwinism has replaced classicism in the modern curriculum, and college graduates are not so much gentlemen as bureaucrats, but the dilemma is in principle the same.

The solution is the biblical covenant, which provides Christians with revelational standards of evaluation that are to govern both the form and the content of education, but Christians have never believed this strongly enough to establish biblical guidelines for education. The answer, in short, is theocracy—"God rules through God's rules"—but this suggestion is as abhorrent to modern pietistic Christians as it was to Julian.

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29. James D. Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 171–78.

30. This was the dilemma of Regent University's law school, which received provisional accreditation by the ABA on the basis of its dean's public commitment to an as-yet undeveloped, updated version of James Madison's pre-Darwinian, eighteenth-century political pluralism, and which in 1993 fired the dean and promised to adopt a more mainstream curriculum. "Titus Breaks His Silence," *World* (Feb. 5, 1994). The dean was Herbert Titus, who wrote an appendix in R. J. Rushdoony's book, *Law and Society*, vol. 2 of *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, 1982).

D. Modernism's Gods

Modernism's gods are the lineal descendants of the gods of the Hellenistic world, which were *influence, wealth, and sophistication*. They are gods of a systematically secular civilization: *politics, economics, and formal education*. Their confessional demands are not so clearly stated as the traditional gods of Canaan were. They offer so many benefits and seem to demand very few formal sacrifices. They offer the universally pursued fruits of the division of labor in every field. They invite into their company all those who are willing to endure intellectual separation from the communities in which they were born. They demand this separation, initially, only in those areas of life that produce wealth and social advantages. They rigidly segregate the realm of formal worship from the world of economic productivity and civil service. They relegate the confessional world of revealed religion to the fringes of culture. They condescendingly allow the regularly scheduled formal worship of these culturally banished gods, but these schedules are limited by custom, and sometimes are banned by law (e.g., tax-funded anything in the United States).

Modernism's gods are like the gods of classical humanism, for they are part of the creation. Modernism denies judicial significance to anything outside the space-time continuum. Modernism's gods are gods of man's professed autonomy. Unlike the gods of classical humanism, they are universal gods that honor no geographical boundaries. They are idols of the mind and spirit. They offer power, wealth, and prestige to those who are willing to submit to their impersonal laws. They serve as the foundations of empire: man's empire. They claim the allegiance of all who would be successful.

Because they are impersonal gods, their various priesthoods can comfort the worshippers of personal gods by assuring them that the honoring of modernism's gods in no way dishonors the religion of any traditional god. The priests of modernism thereby proclaim the universal reign of humanism's kingdom, a reign unaffected by the competing claims of the worshippers of traditional deities.

Behind the competing dogmas of the great religions is the agreed-upon god of *numerical relationships*. Also above competing claims by the priests of the gods of revelation is the transfiguring promise of *compound economic growth*. The traditional priest takes your money and gives you assurances of eternal peace. The banker takes your money and gives you 2% to 5%, compounded. The many-colored robes of a hundred priestly orders cannot compete with the dazzling

white smocks of the scientific priesthood. Or so it seems.

It takes a highly sophisticated skeptic to perceive that the relevance of numerical relationships cannot be explained logically,[31] that compound economic growth cannot continue indefinitely in a finite world,[32] and that science places man on a meaningless treadmill of discovery in which every truth will be superseded, in which there is no long-term security of belief.

The reality of the permanent conflict between God and the gods of modernism can be seen in the outcome of their respective historical sanctions. Jews, as the original covenant people, regard themselves as heirs of the covenant. If any people should be immune to the lure of false gods, Jews believe, they are that people. Yet the worship of the gods of modernism has made great inroads in the Jewish community. They have trusted the modern state, only to be repeatedly betrayed by it.[33] They have trusted the economy, only to be blamed as malefactors and conspirators because of their economic success.[34] They have trusted education, only to have lost their confessional identity. The phrase, "I'm a Jew," today masks an absence of any agreed-upon theological or judicial content.

Over time, one begins to perceive that Jews are over-represented in the ranks of mathematicians, bankers, scientists, Hollywood celebrities, and in other fields. Meanwhile, there do not seem to be many rabbis who still defend the infallibility of the five books of Moses.

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31. Eugene Wigner, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences," *Communications on Pure and Applied Mathematics*, XIII (1960), pp. 1–14. Wigner won the Nobel Prize in physics

32. Gary North, "The Theology of the Exponential Curve," *The Freeman* (May 1970). Reprinted in Gary North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), ch. 8.

33. Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

34. Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (New York: Stein & Day, 1980); Sheldon Marcus, *Father Caughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 146–79. Primary sources include Maj.-Gen. Count Cherep-Spiridovich, *The Secret World Government or "The Hidden Hand"* (New York: Anti-Bolshevist Pub. Assn., 1926); John Beaty, *The Iron Curtain Over America* (Dallas: Wilkenson, 1951); William Guy Carr, *Red Fog Over America*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: National Federation of Christian Laymen, 1957); Carr, *Pawns in the Game*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: St. George Press, 1962); Olivia Marie O'Grady, *The Beasts of the Apocalypse* (Benicia, California: O'Grady Publications, 1959); Wilmot Roberston, *The Dispossed Majority*, rev. ed. (Cape Canaveral, Florida: Howard Allen, 1972), ch. 15. Most of these anti-Semitic books are out of print. They were always little-known, privately published, and consigned to the far-right fringe of American conservatism.

In fact, the relationship seems to be inverse: the fewer the number of Torah-affirming rabbis, the more Jews who are visible in leadership positions inside the priesthoods of modernism.

E. Pietism and Politics

"Fewer Torah-affirming rabbis, more successful Jews." Because of the visible success of the Jewish minority in the West, this observation is easy to make. But the same inverse relationship seems to operate in Christian fundamentalist circles, although in the opposite form: "More Bible-believing ministers, fewer successful Christians." There are reasons for this. Many fundamentalist Christians conclude that success in this world is a spiritual trap to be avoided, a goal to be shunned. "Politics is dirty. Riches are a trap. Too much education is a bad thing." Premillennial dispensationalism has called into question the time available to Christians to pursue projects that rely on long-term compounding for success. As Rev. J. Vernon McGee put it in the early 1950s, "You don't polish brass on a sinking ship." In recent years, this success-rejecting presupposition has been called into question in some charismatic circles.[35] They are a minority.

Meanwhile, as American fundamentalist Christians have become politically active since 1976, they have steadily abandoned their commitment to dispensationalism. This is especially true of fundamentalism's national leaders.[36] They rarely speak about eschatology any more, and when they do, what they say about the future is at odds with what their multi-million dollar organizations are doing. An eschatology that confidently preaches inevitable failure in history for Christians is inconsistent with Christian political mobilization. The goal of politics is to win, not lose. Also, the rise of the independent Christian education movement since 1965 has been accompanied by the idea that Christian education should be better than secular education, which places a new degree of responsibility on Christians to develop superior curriculum materials. While fundamentalists have proven incapable of doing this, especially for students above the age of 15, they at least have understood that the task is necessary. But after three centuries of having to choose between right-wing Enlightenment humanism and left-wing Enlightenment humanism, Protestant Christians are not in a position to offer a well-developed alternative.

35. The "positive confession" movement is the most obvious example.

36. I predicted this in my essay, "The Intellectual Schizophrenia of the New Christian Right," *Christianity and Civilization*, 1 (1982), pp. 1–40.

Fundamentalists have generally chosen right-wing humanism—Adam Smith, James Madison—but they have at best baptized it in the name of vague biblical principles. They have not shown exegetically how the Bible leads to right-wing humanism's policy conclusions.

Calvinists and Lutherans never adopted such a comprehensive world-rejecting outlook, where at least middle-class success has been assumed to be normative, but they have also been deeply compromised by humanist education, especially at the collegiate level. Calvinist and Lutheran leaders and churches have gone theologically liberal and then politically liberal with far greater regularity than fundamentalist leaders and churches have.

The gods of the modern world, being universal in their claims, imitate the universalism of the kingdom of God. They undergird the kingdom of man. Their proffered blessings are not uniquely tied to the land as the gods of the ancient world were. These gods are not placated by sacred offerings of the field. They are placated only by confession and conformity: the affirmation of their autonomous jurisdiction within an ever-expanding realm of law—civil, private, or both. Their priestly agents offer positive sanctions to those who conform covenantally: the traditional human goals of health, wealth, power, fame, and security, as well as the great lure of the twentieth century, low-cost entertainment. The last goal has become necessary to offset the side effect of the first five: boredom.

America's mainline Protestant denominations suffered the same fate confessionally during the same period.[37] Catholicism resisted the trend until the mid-1960s, but this resistance collapsed almost overnight, 1965–75.[38] Evangelicals are also succumbing.[39] Only fundamentalists, charismatics, and a handful of Calvinists and Lutherans, especially those committed to Christian education through high school, are maintaining their resistance by proclaiming late eighteenth-century right-wing Enlightenment humanism as an ideal. Church growth is taking place in those American churches that are resisting the liberal humanist tide. This has been true ever since the mid-1920s,[40] the

37. William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976).

38. Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits: The Society of Jesus and the Betrayal of the Church* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). For a representative primary source, see *A New Catechism: Catholic Faith for Adults* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967). It was released by the bishops of the Netherlands in 1966.

39. Hunter, *Evangelicalism*.

40. Joel A. Carpenter, "Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929–1942," *Church History*, 49 (1980), p. 65.

very period in which liberal Protestant church growth peaked in the United States.[41]

Conclusion

The ancient empires adopted syncretism as a way to hold together the political order. Just as the syncretistic gods of the families and clans in Greece and Rome entered into the common pantheon of the city-state, becoming political gods, so did the gods of conquered city-states enter into the pantheon of the Roman Empire. The welcoming of these gods into the Roman pantheon undermined the ritual-theological foundations of the Roman Republic. Empires in the ancient world required the subordination of local gods to the political order.

This is in principle no different in modern pluralism. What has changed is the local character of the participating gods. They have become universalistic, mimicking the God of the Bible. The modern pantheon is not filled with idols. Pluralism acknowledges all religions as equal, just an syncretism acknowledged all idols as equal. But in both cases, this equality was the equality of subordination to the god of politics. This god is the supreme god of every political empire.

The anti-Christian leaders of the modern world are now campaigning for the creation of a New World Order. This is another move in the direction of empire. It will not come to pass. Babel always falls.

41. Robert Handy, "The American Religious Depression, 1925–1935," *ibid.*, 29 (1960), pp. 3–16.

APPENDIX D

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF AMERICAN JUDAISM: A STUDY IN DISINHERITANCE

> *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*
>
> ROMANS 11:25–27

Jews worry a lot about their corporate future. The continuing recurrence of this fear has been unique to Jews. Members of no other ethnic group have gone into print so often to proclaim the possibility that they might disappear as a separate people.[1] As Otto Scott, of Irish descent, once remarked: "Can you imagine an Irishman worrying in public about this possibility?" Yet, eschatologically speaking, this Jewish fear is legitimate. Paul in Romans 11 taught that the Jews will eventually disappear as a separate covenantal confessional group and be welcomed into the church.[2] They will, alongside many other ethnic groups, retain their cultural accents and dialects, but the

1. See, for example, Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Vanishing American Jew: In Search of Jewish Identity for the Next Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997).

2. "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?" (Rom. 11:23–24). Cf. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1864] 1950), p. 365; Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Robert Carter, 1858), pp. 551–52; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), II, pp. 65–103. Gary North, *Cooperation and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Romans*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 8.

grammar of their confession will be Trinitarian. They will cease to be Jews. Nevertheless, until this happens, Jews will successfully maintain their separate covenantal identity as a people. The question is: Which Jews? The answer is: Jews who both understand and apply the covenantal principle of inheritance and disinheritance.

Judaism, in the sense of adherence to the teachings of the Talmud, is a minority religion even in the State of Israel. A minority religion's greatest threat is not genocide. It is intermarriage. Genocide is not a comparable threat, as the early church learned in the Roman Empire. It is never complete because it is always geographically and temporally bounded: this group of adherents in this region persecuted by this State for this period of time. Genocide reinforces the sense of solidarity among the targeted victims, especially first-generation refugees. Genocide creates a reaction: among the victors, who eventually grow weary of the bloodshed and grow embarrassed by the world's reaction, and among the victims, who adopt social strategies of survival. Threats strengthen the will to resist. Seduction weakens it.

A. The Sociology of Seduction

Seduction is the Jews' problem—seduction in the broadest sense, but also in the narrowest. The seduction that threatens a confessional religion more than any other is marital seduction: the confessionally mixed marriage. God warned Israel about this: "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods" (Ex. 34:14–16). Moses did not warn the daughters not to marry Canaanite husbands; he warned the men not to marry Canaanite wives. Women were seen as the seducers of covenant religion.

Judaism had its origin in the triumph of the Pharisees after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple removed the Sadducees from power.[3] Judaism has always viewed seduction as asymmetrical covenantally: wives have the upper hand in mixed marriages. Judaism has been structured to take advantage of this aspect of the

3. Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962); Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (New York: KTAV, [1973] 1978).

mixed marriage. It defines a Jew as someone born of a Jewish mother. The mother's love of her children, which is the most powerful and universal social force there is, is harnessed to the judicial definition of what constitutes a Jew. A Jewish woman may be seduced away from her parents' plans, but she is not automatically disinherited. She is held less responsible than her brothers in this area of life. She does not bear the mark of the Jewish covenant: circumcision. Her flesh does not testify against her marriage vow, as it does with a maritally seduced Jewish male. She abandons less than he does. Her status as a Jew is transmitted to her children, if they confess the faith. This gives her a great incentive to rear her children as Jews, if possible. Her husband, whose faith was sufficiently weak to permit him to marry someone outside his faith, is not in a strong position to oppose her.

This asymmetric condition is reflected in the statistics of religious training among the children of mixed marriages: Jews with others. In 1971, 86% of the children of Jewish mothers and gentile fathers were reared as Jews, while only 17% of the children of Jewish fathers and gentile mothers were reared as Jews.[4] In the mutual seduction of a mixed marriage, American Jewish women have retained the upper hand.

This is why the negative sanction of disinheritance of sons has always been crucial for the survival of Judaism. Jewish daughters have seldom inherited, so the threat of disinheritance has not been equally great. The Mosaic law allowed daughters to inherit rural land only when there was no son (Num. 36).[5] So, Judaism's threat of disinheritance has been aimed at keeping sons in line. Jewish daughters have always had less to lose and more to gain than their brothers when entering into mixed marriages. Because Jewish women did not inherit money, and because their children could inherit their mothers' judicial status, the gentiles' seduction of Jewish women has never been the same degree of threat to the survival of Judaism. It is the seduction of sons that has been the primary threat. To defend against this, Judaism imposed harsh sanctions. When it ceased to impose them, it began a march into self-annihilation through seduction.

But who is the chief seducer? Not Christianity or any other confessional supernatural religion. Christianity cannot adopt mixed

4. This was the finding of the National Jewish Population Study of 1970–71, reported by U. O. Schmelz and Sergio Dellapergola, "Basic Trends in American Jewish Demography," in Steven Bayme (ed.), *Facing the Future: Essays On Contemporary Jewish Life* (n.p.: KTAV Publishing House and American Jewish Committee, 1989), p. 92.

5. Gary North, *Sanctions and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Numbers* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1997] 2012), ch. 22.

marriages as tools of evangelism; such marriages are forbidden. They break the covenant, which is necessarily confessional. For the humanist, however, marriage is not seen as a covenant based on a mutual oath before God. It is seen as a cultural institution based on a breakable oath before the state, and the state is seen as religiously neutral. The humanist therefore sees no confessional problem with mixed marriages, for marriage is not perceived as a covenant that is based on a shared confession of faith. He encourages confessionally mixed marriages as a means of undermining the testimony of both partners to their children. *This is why humanism is the supreme threat to modern Judaism*. Unlike supernatural-confessional religions that are also threatened by seduction and which oppose mixed marriages, humanism proclaims the equality of all supernatural religious confessions—an equality of cultural irrelevance. Humanism seeks to seduce the sons and daughters of every supernatural religion. Thus, humanism is an equal opportunity seducer: men and women of all faiths are equally its targets.

The ideal of the confessionally mixed marriage has led, step by step, to the ideal of the sexually mixed college dormitory. The humanist believes in the efficacy of seduction. He believes that, in the competition between lust and the covenant, lust will win in the 18–24 age group. He believes that the children of Israel, if given the opportunity, will rise up to play.

This is why humanism constitutes the greatest threat to Judaism in its history. A majority religion can survive the assaults of mixed marriage much longer than a minority religion can. There are more candidates for marriage for the members of a majority religion. A minority religion cannot afford the temporary luxury of tolerating mixed marriages. This is especially true of American Jews, who are experiencing birth rates well below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per family. "If Jews, who in most parts of the United States constitute a tiny minority, were to choose their spouses at random, hardly any endogamous Jewish couples would be formed at all."[6]

Humanism calls on all partners to choose their marital partners on a confessionally random basis. To encourage this, humanism has created the most powerful marriage bureau in history: the tax-funded secular university. No group has responded with greater enthusiasm to the siren call of the secular university than the Jews, a topic I shall discuss later in this essay.

6. Schmelz and Dellapergola, "Basic Trends," in Bayme, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

B. The Ghetto and Cultural Identity

European Jews prior to the Napoleonic wars (1798–1815) were isolated inside their own autonomous communities: ghettos. Some of these ghettos were urban; others were in small towns. When religious discrimination began to be repealed by Napoleonic law in the first half of the nineteenth century, Jews began to venture out of the ghetto, both intellectually and geographically.[7] The Jewish community's abandonment of traditional Judaism began at that time. A division appeared between reforming Jews and defenders of Talmudic knowledge. Historian Paul Johnson writes: "The pious Jew—and there could be no other—did not admit the existence of two kinds of knowledge, sacred and secular. There was only one. Moreover, there was only one legitimate purpose in acquiring it: to discover the exact will of God, in order to obey it."[8] Reform Judaism rejected this outlook; it sought to bring Jews into the world around them. It appeared in the second decade of the nineteenth century.[9] The term "Orthodox Judaism" did not appear until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The term was coined by Reform critics of traditional Judaism.[10]

In Germany, legal discrimination against Jews faded steadily after 1820 and was gone by 1880.[11] Legal equality brought legal integration into the gentile community. Secular law revoked the long-standing special legal situation of Jews, where rabbis and elders possessed the authority to impose civil sanctions on members of the Jewish community. This separate legal status went back to the late Roman Empire. Israel Shahak writes of European Jewry in general: "This was the most important social fact of Jewish existence before the advent of the modern state: observance of the religious laws of Judaism, as well as their inculcation through education, were enforced on Jews by physical coercion, from which one could escape by conversion to the religion of the majority, amounting in the circumstances to a total social break and for that reason very impracticable, except during a re-

7. Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), Part 5.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 327.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 332–33.

10. I. Grunfeld, "Samson Raphael Hirsch—The Man and His Mission," in *Judaism Eternal: Selected Essays from the Writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch*, 2 vols. (London: Soncino, 1956), I, p. xxiii. Grunfeld said that Hirsch accepted this term of opprobrium and, through his leadership, transformed it into an acceptable self-definition.

11. Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880, vol. 3 of The Jewish People in America*, 5 vols. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 17.

ligious crisis."[12] Paralleling this change in the Jews' legal status was an increase in animosity against them, although they never constituted more than 1.3% of the German population.[13] Social discrimination against Jews in Germany remained common, culminating with the systematic Nazi persecutions, 1933–45.

In contrast, there was almost no social discrimination against Jews in the United States prior to the Civil War (1861–65). Jews had lived in North America as a culturally assimilated people from the mid-seventeenth century. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, they had become part of American urban life: in clothing, hair styles, and architecture.[14] In New York, Jews became eligible for citizenship as early as 1715, although this was unique in pre-Revolutionary America.[15] They never received a separate grant of authority to impose civil sanctions on deviant members of the synagogue. As a result, Jews were far more integrated into American life than their counterparts were in Europe prior to the 1820s. Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal and Ashkenazic Jews from Germany and Poland lived together from the beginning in New Amsterdam. This continued when it became New York City in 1664. They worked out an agreement on common worship and rule, 1728–1825; elsewhere in America, separate synagogues were common.[16]

American Jews were a tiny percentage of the population throughout the nineteenth century. In 1820, there were about 2,700 Jews in America.[17] The overall American population in 1820 was 9.6 million.[18] There were so few Jews that there were no rabbis. Until 1840, there was no ordained, functioning rabbi in the United States, i.e., someone who had graduated from a recognized rabbinical school or who had been certified by a talmudic scholar of distinction who had been licensed.[19] By 1840, the number of Jews in the United States had risen

12. Israel Shahak, "The Jewish religion and its attitude to non-Jews," *Khamsin*, VIII (1981), p. 28. See also Diner, *Gathering*, p. 18.

13. Diner, *Gathering*, p. 9.

14. Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820*, vol. 1 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), ch. 4.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 60–61, 125.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

18. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), I:8, Series A 1–5.

19. Jacob Rader Marcus, "The Handsome Young Priest in the Black Gown: The Personal World of Gershom Seixas," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XL–XLI (1969–70), p. 411.

to 6,000. In 1848, there were 50,000[20] As a means of comparison, consider that in 1840, there were 17 million Americans; in 1850 there were 23 million.[21]

Then, in the 1850s, came the steamship.[22] This changed both the volume and pattern of immigration: from northern Europe to eastern, central, and southern Europe. The great waves of immigration hit America from all over Europe, not just Protestant northern Europe. American demographics changed rapidly. Among the tens of millions of immigrants were millions of Jews. Total immigration of Jews to the United States was no more than 150,000 as of 1880.[23] From 1860 to 1880, more of these came from eastern Europe than from Germany.[24] There were about 240,000 Jews in America in 1880.[25] Of these, 200,000 were from Germany.[26] Over the next 45 years, some 2.5 million Jews arrived, with the vast majority from eastern Europe, especially Russia.[27] From 1880 to 1920, one-third of all the Jews in Eastern Europe emigrated, and over 80% of them came to the United States.[28] Diner argues—implausibly, in my view—that this new immigration was not fundamentally different from the old: same Judaism, same immigration motivation, i.e., economic opportunity.[29] This is the equivalent of saying that, culturally speaking, New York City's Episcopalians were not fundamentally different from the Baptists of the American frontier. Even this comparison understates the difference. Episcopalians were separated from the Baptists by the Allegheny mountains. Sephardic Jews, assimilated into the German-Polish Jewish community from 1841 to 1920,[30] were separated from Russian Jews in New York City by a horse carriage ride and the money to purchase it.[31]

20. Diner, *Gathering*, p. 56.
21. *Historical Statistics, loc. cit.*
22. Diner, *Gathering*, p. 43.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
26. Gerold Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920,* vol. 3 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 2.
27. Dinar, *Gathering*, p. 233.
28. Sorin, *Building*, pp. xv, 1.
29. Diner, *Gathering*, pp. 232–33.
30. Jacob Rader Marcus, "The Periodization of American Jewish History," *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*, XLVII (Sept. 1957–June 1958), p. 129.
31. Stephen Birmingham, "Our Crowd": *The Great Jewish Families of New York* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Birmingham, *The Grandees: America's Sephardic Elite* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Birmingham titled chapter 16, "The Jewish Episcopalians." There has been a reaction to this view among a few Jewish historians. Some of

The hostile reactions of the gentile community after 1870 marked a change in its opinion regarding the perceived differences of the new immigration, not merely the latter's increased volume but its social characteristics. In the 1870s, Jews began to be kept out of exclusive resorts and social clubs, and Jewish girls were excluded from certain eastern women's colleges, but this was the extent of the discrimination.[32] (By the early twenty-first century, social club exclusion is all that remains, and only just barely.) After 1900, social discrimination against Jews increased.[33] After World War I, it increased dramatically.[34] This exclusion reflected social opinion within the Jewish community. Sorin comments: "The farther west in Europe one's origins, the higher one's status." He calls this "the geographical origins rule."[35]

The great reversal came in 1945 in reaction to the defeat of the Nazis. Anti-Semitism became unfashionable within educated circles, which more and more circles became. Anti-semitism had never been consistent with the religious pluralism of American life, the "live and let live" attitude which has been characteristic of American culture—an application of nineteenth-century Americans' laissez faire outlook. The Nazi ideology had been defeated on the battlefield, and this reduced the appeal of the old inconsistency. Discrimination was replaced by toleration, and toleration by acceptance, in one generation: 1945 to 1975. But this acceptance has a confessional premise: "My religion is as good as yours, and all religions should be limited to home and congregation." The day that this confession is widely

the authors and the general editor of *The Jewish People in America* (1992), which was funded by the American Jewish Historical Society, reject the familiar periodization of Jewish immigration to America: Sephardic, German-Polish (Ashkenazic), and eastern European. This periodization scheme, familiar to American Jewish historians by 1900, was defended by Marcus, "Periodization of American Jewish History," op. cit., pp. 125–33. With respect to the final wave of immigration, 1880 to 1920, I do not see how its overwhelming eastern European character can be denied. Marcus dated the beginning of the east European Jewish immigration: 1852 (p. 130). This correlates with the advent of the steamship. He dated the triumph of the Russian Jewish tradition: 1920 (p. 130). Simon Kuznets, one of the most respected statisticians in American history and a Nobel Prize winner in economics, remarked that from 1820 to 1870, fewer than 4,000 Jews immigrated from Russia and 4,000 from Poland. From 1881 to 1914, two million Jews immigrated, and over 1.5 million were from Russia: 75%. Kuznets, "Immigration of Russian Jews to the United States: Background and Structure," *Perspectives in American History*, IX (1975), p. 39. Only 15,000 Jews arrived from Russia in the decade, 1871–80. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

32. John Higham, "Social Discrimination Against Jews in America, 1830–1930," *Publication of the Jewish Historical Society*, XLVII (1958), p. 13.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–19.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–23.

35. Sorin, *Building*, p. 2.

believed by members of a minority religion is the day that it moves toward assimilation. A Baptist can afford to confess this in a Methodist culture, or visa versa, but for a Jew in a humanist culture, such a confession is demographically suicidal. It undermines the traditional answers to the question: "What is a Jew?" A new answer now comes back: "A Unitarian with better business connections."

C. Jews and the Gods of Modernism

Throughout the nineteenth century, Jews actively began to pursue the gods of the gentiles around them: gods of marketplace. They got rich in Germany in that century, moving from poverty in 1820 to middle-class affluence by 1880.[36] The same upward movement of Jews took place in America. There was even less discrimination here. The common goal of Americans was making money. De Tocqueville wrote in 1835, "I know no other country where love of money has such a grip on men's hearts. . . ."[37] Access to the free market was open to all people except slaves in the antebellum South. Jews, who had been small traders in Europe, fit in well. They flourished. Like the members of many other ethnic groups, Jews wrote home to relatives in Europe about America's economic opportunities and its lack of religious discrimination. The waves of immigration grew larger.

In the twentieth century, another group of cosmopolitan gods became a temptation for Jews: gods of the academy. For about 25 years, 1920 to 1945, the prestigious American private colleges, universities, and medical schools placed quotas on the number of Jews. (The University of Chicago was an exception.)[38] Yet even in this case, discrimination was fairly lax. At Columbia University in New York City, the Jewish student population had climbed to 40% by 1920.[39] The school's move farther away from the Jewish parts of the city in 1910 failed to reduce the flood of Jewish students when a subway line down the West side was constructed shortly thereafter. Quotas imposed in 1921 reduced this percentage to 22% in 1922.[40] Harvard's Jewish popula-

36. Diner, *Gathering*, pp. 12–13.

37. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited by J. P. Meyer, 12th ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, [1848] 1969), p. 54.

38. Diner, *Gathering*, p. 22. This school has been described as a Baptist institution where atheist students study Thomas Aquinas taught by Jewish professors. My assessment is that their Jewish professors are also atheists.

39. Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920–1945*, vol. 4 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 15.

40. *Idem*.

tion, enhanced by "tram" commuters from Boston, climbed to 20% in 1920. The school's president then announced a quota of 10%. This decision was formally repealed by a special committee in 1923, but Harvard's new policies of accepting more students from the Midwest pushed Jewish enrolment back to 10% by 1930.[41]

Jews had long possessed legal access to tax-supported American schools and universities that came into existence after the Civil War. At the City College of New York in 1920, between 80 and 90% of the students were Jewish. At the Washington Square campus of the private New York University, the figure was 93%.[42] In the 1930's, Jews constituted 3.5% of the American population—the high point—and 10% of its college population. The same drive for education had been present in Europe for a century.[43]

Jews have flourished in this academic environment. Statistically, the biological heirs of Ashkenazic Jews are the most intelligent ethnic group in the United States.[44] Herrnstein and Murray comment: "A fair estimate seems to be that Jews in America and Britain have an overall IQ mean somewhere between a half and a full standard deviation above the mean, with the source of the difference concentrated in the verbal component. . . . But it is at least worth noting that their mean IQ was .97 standard deviation above the mean of the rest of the population and .84 standard deviation above the mean of whites who identified themselves as Christian."[45] These are statistically significant differences. The result has been the exceptional success of Jews in higher education and in the professions, which are screened by means of academic performance and competitive examination systems. "My son, the doctor" and "my son, the lawyer" are not just quaint phrases of proud but formally uneducated Jewish mothers in the 1920s through the 1940s. They are representative summaries of the success of Jews in entering the state-licensed professions, an ethnic penetration way out of proportion to their percentage in the overall population.

But there has been a heavy price to pay: initially, the undermining of confessional Judaism; secondarily, the undermining of cultural Ju-

41. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
44. M. D. Storfer, *Intelligence and Giftedness: The Contributions of Heredity and Early Environment* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), pp. 314–23; cited in Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1994), p. 275.
45. *Idem.*

daism. The West's universities have made the same Faustian bargain to all: come to be certified, but give up your claims in the classroom to academically relevant knowledge based on revelation.[46] The Jews, as a minority based on religious confession, and as a minority with a competitive edge based on intelligence, have had the most to gain economically from this bargain, and the most to lose confessionally. For any religious group self-consciously to adopt a dualism that proclaims "two paths of knowledge" is to risk losing its best and brightest to the world of autonomous humanism. The seeming universalism of humanism's ideology offers to its initiates the power and productivity of the division of intellectual labor. To become a participant in this intellectual division of labor, the initiate need only abandon those aspects of his religious worldview that are irreconcilable or not readily shared with the segregating ideals of rival faiths. Jews have responded to this offer with greater enthusiasm and success than any other religious group in the West.[47] Edward Shapiro commented on the effect of secular values on Jewish professors.

> Most Jewish professors had only a slight relationship to Jewish culture and Judaism. Data collected by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1969 revealed that while 32 percent of professors with a Protestant background and 25 percent with a Catholic background were either indifferent or opposed to religion, 67 percent of Jewish professors were indifferent or opposed to religion. And while 16 percent of Protestant professors and 23 percent of Catholic professors considered themselves deeply religious, only 5 percent of Jewish professors defined themselves as such. In comparison to other Jews, Jewish academicians observed fewer Jewish rituals, were more hostile to religion, affiliated with Jewish communal institutions less frequently, and intermarried more often. . . .
>
> Just as its investment in formal education was greater, so American Jewry spent more time, energy, and money than any other American ethnic or religious group in cultivating and analyzing its intellectuals. There must be something seriously wrong with American Jewry, it was argued, if it could not retain the loyalty of its brightest and best-educated members. The alienation of the Jewish intellectual from the American Jewish community occasioned much wringing of hands. There was, however, little that could have been done to bring Jewish intellectuals back to the fold. The sermons of rabbis and the proclamations of Jewish organizations

46. An example of an Orthodox Jew who accepted the bargain is a Harvard Law School professor, Alan Dershowitz, whose study of the effects of secularization reveals the plight of American Jewry: at the present rate of intermarriage, there will be no trace of the Jews in a century. Dershowitz, *Vanishing American Jew*.

47. See Irving Greenberg, "Jewish Survival and the College Campus," *Judaism*, XVII (Summer 1968).

> could hardly convince intellectuals and academicians to abandon their secular and universalist outlook.[48]

So, by worshipping in the shrines of secular culture, Jews are disappearing as a separate religious force. They are a political force, but not a religious force. Their separate legal status, which was an aspect of the judicial discrimination against them in Christian civilization, had enabled them to preserve their separate religious status for almost two millennia. With the coming to power of the gods of secular humanism—politics, money, and education—Jews left the ghetto and entered the public square to worship with their votes, their taxes, and their children. Public schools have become the established churches of Western civilization. Like the gentiles around them, Jews have tithed their children to the state. Also, since at least the 1930s, a majority of American Jews has consistently voted to allow the state to extract an ever-greater percentage of their income.[49] The saying is, "American Jews have the income of Episcopalians and the voting record of Puerto Ricans."[50] Non-observant Jews have favored the welfare state.[51] As an Orthodox and politically conservative rabbi has put it, "many non-observant Jews desperately pursue liberalism as a way out of their covenant. This is the true purpose of liberalism and Jews are its chief champions because it alone offers an escape from having to accept Jewish law—the Torah."[52]

One Jewish leader in the American financial community has said of the Jewish New York elite of the 1820–1920 era: "Our Crowd is deader than a doornail. Ninety percent have disappeared and few are Jewish anymore."[53] This problem is not confined to the United States; European Jews are also disappearing through assimilation.[54]

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48. Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry since World War II*, vol. 5 of *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 112, 113.

49. Nathaniel Weyl, *The Jew in American Politics* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968), ch. 12.

50. Cf. Peter Steinfels, "American Jews Stand Firmly to the Left," *New York Times* (Jan. 8, 1989).

51. Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 125ff.

52. Daniel Lapin, "Why Are So Many Jews Liberal?" *Crisis: A Journal of Lay Catholic Opinion* (April 1993).

53. Alan Greenberg of Bear, Stearns & Co. Cited in Jean Bear, *The Self-Chosen: "Our Crowd" is Dead* (New York: Arbor House, 1982), p. 23.

54. Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996).

D. The Disappearance of Non-Observant Jews

Non-observant Jews in the United States are not reproducing. "In present trends continue," wrote sociologist Ernest van den Haag in 1969, "in the year 2000 there will have never been more handsome, better-endowed synagogues in America, nor so many; nor so few Jews."[55] He argued that the intermarriage problem threatens the survival of American Judaism.[56] By 1969, this problem had been challenging non-observant American Jews for several decades, yet it was not even mentioned in sociologist Marshall Sklare's 1957 anthology, *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group*. But in April, 1964, Sklare sounded a warning in the Jewish publication, *Commentary*, in an article titled, "Intermarriage and the Jewish Future." He sounded the alarm even louder in a second *Commentary* article (March 1970): "Intermarriage and Jewish Survival."[57] But alarms rarely change social patterns, especially convenient ones. People continue to do whatever they have been doing.

A 1971 study showed that the rate of intermarriage was over 30%.[58] In 1973, Reform Judaism, the largest and most liberal branch of American Judaism, made its last public pronouncement opposing such intermarriage. It has subsequently accepted the new reality and has tried to deal with it.[59] In these mixed marriages, only 20% of the spouses convert to Judaism. Three-quarters of the children in families in which the spouse fails to convert are not reared as Jews. Very few of these children marry Jews.[60] One Jewish historian has called this process "the demographic hemorrhaging of American Jewry."[61] The birth rate for Jews is one quarter to one-third less than for gentiles. It is the lowest ethnic birthrate in America.[62] Meanwhile, "Of the major American religious groups, the Jews consistently placed last in surveys of religious attendance and belief."[63] As van den Haag predicted, synagogue attendance declined in the 1970s and 1980s. This was especially true in Conservative synagogues, the group positioned between the liberal Reform Jews and the Orthodox Jews.[64] Edward

55. Ernest van den Haag, *The Jewish Mystique* (New York: Dell, [1969] 1971), p. 181.
56. *Ibid.*, ch. 16.
57. Shapiro, *Healing*, pp. 234–35.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 238–39.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Shapiro ended his book, the fifth in a five-volume history, *The Jewish People in America*, with this forlorn hope: "Jews have survived one crisis after another, and perhaps they will also survive the freedom and prosperity of America."[65] In 1996, the World Jewish Congress, held in Jerusalem, issued a demographic report, *State of World Jewry*. It reported that in the United States, over half of all Jews who married in the 1980s married a non-Jewish partner. About one-quarter of the children of such mixed marriages are reared as Jews.[66]

As with all academic matters, this view is controversial and has critics within the Jewish academic community. The demographic data are not sufficiently comprehensive to be certain. But in a carefully reasoned, highly qualified essay, two Jewish scholars conclude that the pessimists have the trends on their side. American Jews are not reproducing at a rate high enough to replace themselves. Whites in general are in the same situation; Jews, however, reproduce at a rate lower than whites in general. They have the lowest rates of reproduction among whites in the United States. The replacement rate is 2.1 children per family. In the mid-1980s, Jews had a rate of under 1.5; whites in general, 1.7.[67]

Mixed marriages by the mid-1980s were in the range of 30%. The authors comment that "the inferred U.S. rate of 30% for individuals means that 45 percent of all couples with at least one Jewish partner are mixed."[68] Few of the non-Jewish spouses convert to Judaism.[69] This leads to the disinheritance of Judaism. The authors report on a remarkable finding. "A study in Philadelphia covering three generations found that mixed marriages in one generation entailed greater percentages of mixed marriages and increasingly smaller percentages of Jewish children in the following generations. If both parents of the Jewish respondent whose marriage was mixed had been Jews, 37 percent of the grandchildren were Jews; if the grandparents had been a mixed couple, none of the grandchildren were found to be Jewish in this particular study."[70]

By the late 1990s, intermarriage was at the 50% rate. Charles Krauthammer wrote that more Jews marry Christians (he meant gentiles)

65. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
66. Religious News Service, reported in *Christian News* (Feb. 12, 1996), p. 9.
67. Schmelz and Dellapergola, "Basic Trends," *Facing the Future*, *op. cit.*, p. 75: Table 1.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

than marry Jews: about 52%.[71] With only one in four of the children of these mixed marriages being reared Jewish, the future is grim for the survival of Judaism in America. "A population in which the biological replacement rate is 70 percent and the cultural replacement rate is 70% is headed for extinction. By this calculation, every 100 Jews are raising 56 Jewish children. In just two generations, 7 out of 10 Jews will vanish."[72] He concluded that the future of Judaism is dependent on the survival of the State of Israel. The Jews have put most of their eggs—in both senses—in one basket.[73]

We can begin to understand why Jews prior to the First World War excommunicated adult children who converted to another religion, mainly Christianity. They would hold burial services: symbols of covenantal death. They would cut these defecting children out of their lives. They would not see their grandchildren grow up. They suffered the terrible pain of disinheriting their children, especially their sons, for the sake of the preservation of the religion of Judaism. It was a matter of survival.

Today, the religion of Judaism has been progressively replaced by the culture of Judaism—a culture without a public confession that invokes a supernatural God. Today, most American Jews do not believe that the God of the Bible brings covenantal sanctions in history for or against Jews on the basis of the community's use of sanctions against covenantal disinheritance. Tolerance has made mixed marriages acceptable. The defecting children are not cut off through the equivalent of excommunication. The grandchildren are not cut off. But the grandchildren are unlikely to bear children who will be reared as Jews. Under the conditions of mixed marriage, the great grandchildren of Jewish couples will not be Jews. Refusing to disinherit children who marry outside the faith, they disinherit Judaism instead. Covenantal tolerance within Jewish families produces heirs with a different confession of faith. This produces extinction of the original confession.

Judaism is a minority religion. Tolerance within the covenantal bond of marriage leads to absorption. If confession is not seen as more fundamental than sexual attraction, and therefore not a matter of corporate sanctions, the minority faith will disappear. *The contest be-*

71. Charles Krauthammer, "At Last, Zion: Israel and the Fate of the Jews," *Weekly Standard* (May 11, 1998), p. 24.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

tween passion and confession, if left to youth to decide, will lead to the demise of confession. If the surrounding population is larger than those doing the confessing, the aging minority confessors will not be replaced.

The rise of a far more self-conscious Orthodox Judaism, which recruits actively in the secularized Reform Jewish community, has gained considerable publicity. It is not clear yet that this activism has produced any statistically significant change in the religious commitment of most Jews. The high birth rates among Orthodox Jews may in time reverse the larger Jewish community's demographic decline, but in the early twenty-first century, American Judaism is slowly disappearing. Jews are a rapidly aging group: the oldest of all American ethnic groups.[74] This demographic fact is masked by the high visibility of Jewish political involvement and influence in national politics. The rise of Jewish national political influence since the end of World War II has paralleled the rise of influence of the farm bloc. The smaller the number of people actually represented by each bloc, the greater its highly concentrated and well-funded political influence. Both are down to about two percent of the population.[75]

Alan Dershowitz refers to an article in the October 1996 issue of *Moment* magazine. The article reports that, given present birth rates, by the fourth generation, 200 secular Jews will have produced 10 great-grandchildren, while the same number of Orthodox Jews will have produced more than 5,000.[76] It is clear what will happen unless covenantal attitudes regarding the future are reversed. Non-observant Jews in the United States will simply disappear.

What we see here is a fulfillment, three and a half millennia later, of Moses' warning. "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth" (Deut. 6:14–15). The eighteenth century saw the construction of modernism's political temple by the Enlightenment, right wing and left wing. The acceptance of the legitimacy of this temple by the churches

74. Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 95.

75. In 1991, Jews were two percent of the population. *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1994 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994), Table 85. In 1993, agriculture employed 2.5% of the work force. *Ibid*., Table 641. The rise of the gay rights movement after 1970 is an even better example. Homosexuals are a tiny minority—under one percent of the population—yet they have enormous political influence in the United States. As AIDS has reduced the number of homosexual men since the early 1980s, their political influence has increased dramatically.

76. Dershowitz, *Vanishing American Jew*, p. 25.

began the erosion of the ideal of Christendom.[77] The entrance of Jews into this temple in the nineteenth century was the beginning of a great apostasy for Judaism. The leaders of both religions concluded that there could be a reconciliation of confessions through the adoption of a neutral, common-ground confession: humanism. This common confession—politics, money, and education—seemed to offer a new era of economic growth, which in fact occurred. But with Western society's unprecedented increase in economic output has come a rise in philosophical despair, war, crime, decadence, family dissolution, and suicide.

Conclusion

Jews who live outside of the State of Israel suffer from a major problem: they do not face organized opposition. Dershowitz titles chapter two of *The Vanishing American Jew*, "Will the End of Anti-Semitism Mean the End of the Jews?" Jews do not face an armed majority that seeks their destruction. In the State of Israel, a nation surrounded by enemies, they do.

Organized opposition has always been a major factor in the preservation of the Jews' identity as a separate people. Western society was confessional. Jews did not share this confession. The ghetto was the solution for both sides. (For the anti-Talmudic Karaites, a ghetto within the ghetto was the solution.)[78] With the demise of the ghetto and the rise of Reform Judaism, the old barriers began to disappear. So did the Jews' old opposition to gentile culture. Jews had built effective cultural defenses against the conversion of individual Jews to rival religions, especially Christianity. But few Jews in 1850 perceived that secular humanism is a rival religion; even fewer perceived this in 1950. Christianity and Islam had a place for Jews as Jews, but outside the corridors of power. Humanism has a place for Jews as humanists inside the corridors of power. "Come one, come all," cry the humanists, "but you must leave your revelational civil laws outside the

77. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), Part 3. Cf. North, *Conspiracy in Philadelphia: Origins of the United States Constitution* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Dominion Educational Ministries, 2004).

78. This was the case in twelfth-century Constantinople, according to Benjamin of Tudela, whose *Book of Travels* is a major primary source document of the era. Some 2,500 Jews lived in a fenced-off quarter: 2,000 Talmudists and 500 Karaites. A fence separated the two groups. Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 169.

common Temple of Understanding." Jews in unprecedented numbers have succumbed to the siren song of social participation and leadership on these confessional terms.

The cost has been high: escalating absorption. This has always been a threat to Jews. What is unique about humanism's theology of absorption is its theology of a common confession based either on natural law theory or evolutionary political participation. Judaism must now find ways to maintain itself apart from the *shawmah Israel*. The words of *shawmah Israel*—"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut. 6:4)—are still intact, but they have been revised in spirit: "Hear, O Israel, we are not gentiles." But there are two simple, all-too-familiar phrases that have proven incredibly powerful in negating the effects of this revised *shawmah Israel*. First, "Grandma, I won a scholarship to college." Grandma is dutifully proud. This is followed a few years later by, "Grandma, I'd like you to meet my fiancé." Pride is then accompanied by a sense of loss and a sense of foreboding. Both the sense of loss and the sense of foreboding should have accompanied the first announcement.

Pluralism has a program of assimilation. First, it offers the ballot. Then it offers the full-tuition scholarship. Then it offers the co-ed dorm. Then there is the sound of wedding bells—if things go well.[79] Then there is the sound of the pitter-patter of little feet. That sound, delightful as it is, has steadily drowned out the sound of the *shawmaw Israel*.

Then how can the Jews be preserved until the time of the great eschatological conversion? Only by their abandonment of their toleration of mixed marriages and by their abandonment of small families. Jews do not evangelize the general population; hence, there are no workable survival strategies except population growth and the disinheritance of those within the community who abandon the *shawmaw Israel*. Jews cannot persevere as humanists. The demographics of Reform and Conservative Judaism will lead to their replacement by the Orthodox. Orthodox Jews rely on confessional prophylaxis, not biological. Liberal religion is having the same effect on American Protestantism's mainline denominations as it had a century ago on Europe's. Why should Reform and Conservative Jews think they are immune?

Meanwhile, Orthodox Jews, who frown on contraception, are biding their time while filling cribs.

79. The other possibility is the silent scream of the aborted child.

APPENDIX E

FREE MARKET CAPITALISM

[This essay appeared in the 1984 book edited by Robert Clouse, ***Wealth and Poverty: Four Christian Views****, published by InterVarsity Press. It was the first essay. Within a year, InterVarsity Press pulled the book off the market. It sold 6,000 copies to my company, Dominion Press, at 25 cents each. Dr. Clouse wrote to me saying that he could not understand this; the book had been selling well. I like to think that it was my essay and my three rejoinders to the statists who wrote the other three essays. I like to think that I was a great embarrassment to them. The neo-evangelicals who ran IVP were politically liberal, as their publication of D. Gareth Jones' pro-abortion book,* ***Brave New People*** *(1984), indicated. IVP soon suppressed that book, too, because of a successful public relations campaign by anti-abortion Christians. The English branch of IVP kept it in print, which tells you something about the evangelical community in England. I have retained the format in which my essay was originally submitted, including IVP's footnoting style. I have added letters designating the subheads for easier reference. I include this essay in this book because it reveals the extent to which I relied on Deuteronomy, a fact noted at the time by one of the other essayists, William Diehl, a Keynesian, who contemptuously dismissed my essay because of this.]*

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

LEVITICUS 19:15, KJV[1]

I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

PSALM 37:25

The topic of wealth and poverty should not be discussed apart from a consideration of the law of God and its relationship to the covenants,

1. All of my citations of Scripture in this essay are from the King James Version.

for it is in God's law that we find the Bible's blueprint for economics. Biblical justice, biblical law, and economic growth are intimately linked. The crucial section of Scripture which explains this relationship is Deuteronomy 28. There are external blessings for those societies that conform externally to the laws of God (vv. 1–14), and there are external curses for those societies that fail to conform externally to these laws (vv. 15–68).

> And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. . . . The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee (Deut 28:1–5, 9–11).

Deuteronomy 28 is an extension and expansion of chapter 8, in which the relationship between law, blessings, and the covenant is outlined. God was about to bring his people into the Promised Land, as the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham. The "iniquity of the Amorites" (Gen 15:16)[2] was at last full. The Canaanites' era of dominion over the land was about to end. On what terms would the Hebrews hold title to the land and its productivity? Deuteronomy 8 spells it out: *covenantal faithfulness*. This meant adherence to the laws of God.[3]

Deuteronomy 8 reveals to us the foundations of economic growth. First, God grants to his people the gift of *life*. This is an act of grace. He sustained them in the years of wandering in the wilderness, humbling them to prove their faith—their obedience to his commandments (v. 2)—and providing them with manna, so that they might

2. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 23.

3. On the question of Old Testament law in New Testament times, see Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1977).

learn that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth men live" (v. 3b). A 40-year series of miracles sustained them constantly, for their clothing did not grow old, and their feet did not swell (v. 4). He also provided them with chastening, so that they might learn to respect his commandments (vv. 5–6)—the way of life. Second, God provided them with *land*, namely, the land flowing with milk and honey (vv. 7–8): "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (v. 9). This also was an act of grace.

Life and land: Here are the two fundamental assets in any economic system. Human labor, combined with natural resources over time, is the foundation of all productivity. The third familiar feature of economic analysis, *capital*, is actually the combination of land plus labor over time. (The time factor is important. From it stems the economic phenomenon of the rate of interest: the discount of future goods against the identical goods held in the present.[4] (*Warning*: I use footnotes to add explanatory material, to keep from cluttering up the text too much.) The original sources of production are land and labor.[5] If the Hebrews were willing to dig, the land would produce its fruits.

So much for the gifts. What about the conditions of tenure? They were not to forget their God. They were not to "accept the gift but forget the Giver," to use a familiar expression.

The very fulness of the external, visible, measurable blessings would serve as a source of temptation for them:

> When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

4. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Regnery, 1966), chap. 18. Let me give an example of the "discount for time." If I were to announce that you have just won a new Rolls-Royce, and that you have a choice of delivery date, today or one year from today, which delivery date would you select (other things being equal)? You would want immediate delivery. Why? Because present goods are worth more to you than the same goods in the future. You might accept the Rolls-Royce a year from now if I paid you a rate of interest, in addition to the car. In fact, at some rate of interest you would accept the later date, unless you have a terminal disease, or an unquenchable lust for a Rolls-Royce.

5. Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, 2 vols. (1962; reprinted., New York: New York University Press, 1979), I, pp. 284–87, 410–24. See esp. chap. 6. [This book was republished in 1993 by the Mises Institute, Auburn, Alabama.]

> and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God. . . . (Deut 8:10–14a)

God provides gifts: life and land. He also provides a *law-order* which enables his people to expand their holdings of capital assets (the implements of production) and consumer goods. But these assets are not held by men apart from the ethical terms of God's covenant. The temptation before man is the same as the temptation before Adam: to forget God and to substitute himself as God (Gen 3:5). It is the assumption of all Satanic religion, the assumption of *humanism*, the sovereignty of man. God warned the Israelites against this sin—the sin of presuming their own *autonomy*:

> And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day (Deut 8:17–18).

These words lay the foundation of all sustained economic growth—and I stress the word *sustained*. While it is possible for a society to experience economic growth without honoring God's law, eventually men's ethical rebellion leads to external judgment and the termination of economic growth (Deut 28:15–68). It is this concept of God as the giver which underlay James's announcement: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas 1:17).

If men whose society has been (and therefore is still) covenanted with God should fall into this temptation to forget God and to attribute their wealth to the might of their own hands, then God will judge them:

> And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God. (vv. 19–20).

God has given us an outline of the covenantal foundations of a holy commonwealth.[6] This is as close as the Bible comes to a uni-

6. On the holy commonwealth ideal in early American history, see Rousas J. Rushdoony, *This Independent Republic* (1964 reprint ed., Fairfax, Va.: Thoburn Press, 1978), esp. chap. 8.

versally valid "stage theory" of human history or economic development.[7] Long-term economic growth is based on men's honoring the explicit terms of God's law. The stages are as follows:

1. God's grace in providing life, land, and law
2. Society's adherence to the external terms of God's law
3. External blessings in response to this faithfulness
4. Temptation: the lure of autonomy
5. Response:
    a. Capitulation that leads to external judgment; or
    b. Resistance that leads to further economic growth

The covenant is supposed to be *self-reinforcing*, or as economists sometimes say, it offers a system of *positive feedback*. Verse 18 is the key: God gives his people external blessings in order "that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers. . . ." The promise would be visibly fulfilled by their entry into the Promised Land, thereby giving them confidence in the reliability of God's word. God's law-order is reliable, which means that men can rely on biblical law as a *tool of dominion*, which will enable them to fulfill (though imperfectly, as sinners) the terms of God's dominion covenant: "And God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen 1:28). This covenant was reaffirmed with Noah (Gen 9:1–7). It is still binding on Noah's heirs.[8]

The paradox of Deuteronomy 8 is this: Blessings, while inescapable for a godly society, are a great temptation. Blessings are a sign of God's favor, yet in the fifth stage—the society's response to the temptation of autonomy—blessings can result in comprehensive, external, social judgment. Thus, there is no way to determine simply from the existence of great external wealth and success of all kinds—the suc-

7. Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about the great image was *historically specific*: four human empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome), followed by the fifth Empire, God's (Dan 2:31–45). This was not an "ideal type," to use Max Weber's terminology, nor was it a developmental model. Hesiod's seemingly similar construction (Greece, 8th century, B.C.)—from the Age of Gold to the Age of Iron—was, in contrast, an attempt at constructing a universal model of the process of decay in man's history. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1959), lines 109–201. The Bible's developmental model is based on *ethics*—conformity to or rebellion against God's covenant—not *metaphysics*, meaning some sort of inescapable aspect of the creation.

8. Gary North, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1982).

cesses listed in Deuteronomy 28:1–14—that a society is facing either the prospect of continuing positive feedback or imminent negative feedback (namely, destruction). The ethical condition of the people, not their financial condition, is determinative.

Visible success is a paradox: It can testify to two radically different ethical conditions. Biblical ethical analysis, because it recognizes the binding nature of revealed biblical law, is therefore a fundamental aspect of all valid historiography, social commentary, and economic analysis. An index number of economic wealth is a necessary but insufficient tool of economic analysis. The numbers do not tell us all we need to know about the progress of a particular society or civilization. We also need God's law as an ethical guide, our foundation of ethical analysis.

A. Ethics and Economic Analysis

A great debate has raged for over a century within the camp of the economists: "Is capitalism morally valid?" Marxists and socialists ask this question and then answer it: *no*. "But capitalism is efficient," respond the defenders of the free market. A few of the defenders also try to muster ethical arguments based on the right of individuals to control the sale of their property, including their labor services, without interference from the civil government.[9] They rest their moral case on the presumed autonomy of the individual.

This sort of ethical analysis has not convinced many critics of capitalism. They reject the operating presupposition of free market economic analysis: *methodological individualism*. As *methodological collectivists*, they deny the right of men to use their property against the "common good." Problem: Who defines the common good? (The Christian answers that the Bible defines the common good, and sets forth the institutional arrangements that will achieve it. The Bible teaches neither collectivism nor individualism; it proclaims *methodological covenantalism*.)[10] Another problem: Even if the common good can be defined by humanistic social commentators, who has the right to enforce it? Finally, can the state, through its bureaucracy, enforce the common good in a cost-effective manner? Will the results resemble the official ethical goals of the planners? What kinds of incentives

9. Murray N. Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982).

10. Gary North, "Methodological Covenantalism," *Chalcedon Report* (Oct., 1977), published by the Chalcedon Foundation, Box 158, Vallecito, California, 95251.

can be built into a state-planned economy that will enable it to perform as efficiently as a profit-seeking free market economy?[11]

The fundamental issue is *ethical*. The question of efficiency is a subordinate one. Few Marxists or socialist scholars seriously argue any longer that the substitution of socialist ownership of the means of production will lead to an increase of per capita output beyond what private ownership would have produced. The debates today rage over what kinds of economic output are morally valid. Also, who should determine what "the people"—whoever they are—really need? The free market, with its system of private ownership and freely fluctuating prices? Or the civil government, with its system of political competition and lifetime bureaucratic functionaries?[12]

The real debate is a debate over ethical issues, something that economists have tried to hide or deny since the seventeenth century.[13] Economist William Letwin, who is wholeheartedly enthusiastic about this supposed triumph of value-free economics, does admit that there are difficulties with this outlook: "It was exceedingly difficult to treat economics in a scientific fashion, since every economic act, being the action of a human being, is necessarily also a moral act. If the magnitude of difficulty rather than the extent of the achievement be the measure, then the making of economics was the greatest scientific accomplishment of the seventeenth century."[14] Apparently even more important than Newton's discoveries![15] This faith in analytic neutral-

11. One of the finest books ever written in economics covers these questions in detail: Thomas Sowell, *Knowledge and Decisions* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). Sowell is an ex-Marxist, so he knows the arguments well. See also Ludwig von Mises, *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* (1922; reprint ed., Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Press, 1981). This was first published in the United States by Yale University Press in 1953.

12. Gary North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1973), chap. 20: "Statist Bureaucracy in the Modern Economy."

13. "The distinction between moral and technical knowledge is elusive. . . . From the standpoint of any science the distinction is absolutely essential. A subject is not opened to scientific enquiry until its technical aspect has been sundered from its moral aspect. . . . [T]here can be no doubt that economic theory owes its present development to the fact that some men, in thinking of economic phenomena, forcefully suspended all judgments of theology, morality, and justice, were willing to consider the economy as nothing more than an intricate mechanism, refraining for the while from asking whether the mechanism worked for good or evil. That separation was made during the seventeenth century. . . . The economist's view of the world, which the public cannot yet comfortably stomach, was introduced by a remarkable *tour de force*, an intellectual revolution brought off in the seventeenth century." William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (1963; reprint ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday/Anchor, 1965), pp. 158–59.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

15. Letwin does not actually say this. Perhaps he forgot about Newton. Or perhaps he was referring solely to social science when he named economics as "the greatest sci-

ity has been reaffirmed by the developers of the two most prominent schools of free market economic analysis, Milton Friedman[16] and Ludwig von Mises.[17]

One reason why the critics have been so successful in their attack against the academic economists' hypothetically neutral defense of the free market is this: *Hardly anyone in the secular world really believes any longer that moral or intellectual neutrality is possible*. This is why Christian economics offers a true intellectual alternative: it rests on a concept of *objective* revelation by a true *Person*, the Creator of all knowledge and the Lord of history. The Bible affirms that neutrality is a myth; either we stand with Christ or we scatter abroad (Matt 12:30).[18] The works of the law—not the law, but the works of the law—are written on every human heart (Rom 2:14–15).[19] No man can escape the testimony of his own being, and nature itself, to the existence if a Creator (Rom 1:18–23).

Socialists deny the possibility of neutral economic analysis, and their criticism has become far more effective as humanistic scholarship has drifted from faith in objective knowledge into an ever-growing awareness that all human knowledge is relative. (Marxists still believe in objective knowledge for Marxists, but not for any other ideological group.)[20] Since all intellectual analysis is tied to a man's

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entific accomplishment of the seventeenth century." Or possibly he really meant what he wrote, which boggles the mind.

16. Milton Friedman, in a classic essay on epistemology, writes: "Positive economics is in principle independent of any particular ethical position or normative judgment." Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 4. For a critique of the hypothesis of neutrality in economics, see Gary North, "Economics: From Reason to Intuition," in North, ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, Calif.: Ross House Books, 1976).

17. Mises writes: "In considering changes in the nation's legal system, in rewriting or repealing existing laws and writing new laws, the issue is not justice, but social expediency and social welfare. There is no such thing as an absolute notion of justice not referring to a definite system of social organization. It is not justice that determines the decision in favor of a definite social system. It is, on the contrary, the social system which determines what should be deemed right and what wrong. There is neither right nor wrong outside the social nexus. . . . It is nonsensical to justify or to reject interventionism from the point of view of fictitious and arbitrary absolute justice. It is vain to ponder over the just delimitation of the tasks of government from any preconceived standard of perennial values." Mises, *Human Action*, p. 721.

18. On the impossibility of neutrality, see the writings of Cornelius Van Til, especially *The Defense of the Faith*, rev. ed. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963).

19. For a discussion of the similarities and differences between "the law" and "the works of the law" written on human hearts, see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1959), I, pp. 74–76.

20. Marxists believe in objective truth—proletarian truth—but they hold that all

operating presuppositions about the nature of reality, and since these presuppositions, being pre-theoretical, cannot be disproven by logic, the socialist critic's logic is also undergirded by his equally unprovable presuppositions.[21] (There is a problem for non-Christian subjectivist thought, however: the breakdown of objective science.)[22] Even a few economists are slowly coming to face the implications of subjectivism with respect to objective, neutral analysis, but not many, and their books are not yet influential. These men tend to be associated with "new left" economics, and the "establishment" is not impressed.[23]

As Christians we must always maintain that *ethics is basic to all social analysis*. We must make clear what most professional economists prefer to ignore: It is never a question of analysis apart from ethical evaluation; it is only a question of which ethical system, meaning *whose* law-order: God's or self-professed autonomous man's? Because the Bible provides us with a comprehensive system of ethics, it thereby provides us with a blueprint for economics.[24]

B. Biblical Law and Exploitation

The prophets came before Israel and called the people back to the law of God. The people did not respond; the result was captivity.

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other approaches are intellectual defenses of a particular class perspective. All philosophy is class philosophy—a weapon used by one class against its rivals. Since history is objectively on the side of the proletariat, there can be objective truth for Marxists only. See Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1968), pp. 61–71. [Reprinted in 1989 by the Institute for Christian Economics.]

21. Compare Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970). See also Imre Lakatos and Alan E. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1970). The works of Herman Dooyeweerd, the Dutch legal philosopher, deal extensively with the pre-theoretical presuppositions of all philosophy: *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Philipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960); *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4 vols. (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1954).

22. Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), chap. 15.

23. See, for example, Walter A. Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971); Mark A. Lutz and Kenneth Lux, *The Challenge of Humanistic Economics* (Menlo Park, California: Benjamin/Cummings, 1979). Lux is a clinical psychologist, not an economist, and Lutz taught at an obscure college. Benjamin/Cummings is not a familiar name in publishing. I am not berating these men, their publisher, or their employers, though I do not share their economic views. I am pointing to the difficulty of getting such views discussed within the normal channels of the economics profession. The economics profession has not adopted the forthright acceptance by these men of the obvious implications of subjectivism for the neutrality doctrine.

24. David Chilton, "The Case of the Missing Blueprints," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, VIII (Summer, 1981).

The law of God, when enforced, prevents exploitation. The case-law applications of the law are therefore to be honored. Even the supposedly obscure case laws often have implications far beyond their immediate setting. For example, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut 25:4). Paul tells us that this law gives us a principle: "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (I Tim 5:18b). Christ also said that the laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7). In short, if we must allow our beasts of burden to enjoy the fruits of their labor, how much more should human laborers enjoy the fruits of their labor!

Problem: Who decides how much to pay laborers? The church? The state? The free market? The Bible is quite clear on this point: Laborers and employers should bargain together. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard is based on the *moral validity of the right of contract*. The employer hired men throughout the day, paying each man an agreed-upon wage, a penny. Those hired early in the morning complained when others hired late in the day received the same wage. In other words, they accused their employer of "exploitation." This was an "unfair labor practice." His answer:

> Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take [that which] thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last [laborer], even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? (Matt 20:13–15)

Wasn't he morally obligated—and shouldn't he have been *legally* obligated—to have paid more, retroactively, to those hired early in the day? No. When they were hired, he offered them the best deal they believed they had available to them. He was "meeting the market." Had a better offer been available elsewhere, they would have accepted it. Alternatively, should he have paid less to the men hired later in the day? No. He owed them the wage he had agreed to pay. Those hired in the morning had not known that a job would be available later in the day at the same wage. They faced *economic uncertainty*. (Economic uncertainty about the future is an inescapable fact of human action in a world in which only God is omniscient. Any system of economics that in any way ignores or de-emphasizes the economic effects of uncertainty is innately, inescapably erroneous, for it relies on a false doctrine of man.) They took the best offer that any employer made. If they had been omniscient, they might have waited, lounged around for almost the whole day, and then accepted an eleventh-hour job

offer. "A full day's pay for an hour's labor: what a deal!" (An analogous approach to salvation: refuse to accept the Gospel in your youth, so that you can "eat, drink, and be merry," and then accept Christ on your deathbed. "A full life's worth of salvation for a last-minute repentance: what a deal!") But men are not omniscient. So they act to benefit themselves with the best knowledge at their disposal.[25] The employer had done them no wrong. Their eye was evil.

Christ used this parable to illustrate a theological principle, the sovereignty of God in choosing men: "So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen" (v. 16). The employer had a job opportunity to offer men; God offers salvation in the same way. The employer paid a full day's wage to those coming late in the day. If this action of the employer was wrong, then God's analogous action in electing both young and old ("late comers" and "early comers") to the same salvation is even more wrong. But this is the argument of the ethical rebel; Paul dismisses it as totally illegitimate. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom 9:14–15).

One of the most important facts of economics is this: *Employers compete against employers*, while *workers compete against workers*. Employers do not want rival employers to buy any valuable economic factor of production at a discount. Those who hire laborers do so in order to use their services profitably. They have no incentive to pass along savings to their competitors. If a worker's labor is worth five shekels per hour to two different potential employers, and the worker is about to be hired by one of them for four shekels, the second employer has an incentive to offer him more. He will offer him enough to lure him away from the competitor, but not so much that he expects to lose money on the transaction. The free market's competitive auction process therefore offers *economic* rewards to employers for doing the *morally correct* thing, namely, honoring the biblical principle that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

Similarly, workers compete against workers. They want jobs. If an employer is offering a job to one employee for more than another person willing to work for, the second person has an incentive to step

25. Again, consult Sowell's book, *Knowledge and Decisions*, for a detailed analysis of this issue. Also, see the classic study by Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (1921; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Pubs., n.d.).

in and utter those magic words: "I'll work for less!" He underbids the competition. (When I say "underbid," I mean underbid in terms of money; I could also say that he overbids his competitors in terms of the hours of labor that he offers the employer for a given wage payment.) The free market's auction process offers an incentive to workers to offer employers "an honest day's labor for an honest day's pay." In short, the free market offers economic rewards to laborers for doing the morally correct thing, just as it offers employers.

Very, very rarely do employers and workers in a modern industrialized economy compete head to head. These instances take place when neither the worker nor the employer has a good idea of his own competition, or when one of the two is ignorant. Laborers may not know the going wage rate. Employers may not know if other workers are available for the money they are willing to pay. So it becomes a question of *negotiation*, the same kind of negotiation that Esau and Jacob transacted for Esau's birthright (Gen 23:29–34).

There is nothing wrong with competitive bargaining, as I explain in chapter eighteen of my economic commentary on the Bible, *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis*. Normally, competing offers are well known to all parties; advertising has made information on pricing and services widely available. "Help wanted" signs and classified ads do more for the income of the majority of laborers than all the trade unions in the land—legalized monopolies established by one group of workers to deny the legal right of other workers to compete against them.[26] Nevertheless, where there are gaps in men's information, men must pay to improve their knowledge. *Information is not a zero-cost good*. Any system of economic analysis which ignores or de-emphasizes this economic fact of life is innately, inescapably erroneous.

When a society guarantees men that they will be allowed to keep the fruits of their labor, it promotes the spread of information. Men can afford to invest in the expensive process of improving their knowledge. They are able to capitalize their efforts. If they are successful in improving their knowledge about competing economic offers, either as employers or laborers, they reap the rewards. Members of society are the beneficiaries, since better knowledge means less waste—fewer scarce economic resources expended to achieve given economic ends. The ends are set by competing bidders in the "auction" for consumer

26. Gary North, "A Christian View of Labor Unions," *Biblical Economics Today* (April/May 1978), published by the Institute for Christian Economics.

goods and services.[27] It should be recognized from the beginning that a deeply felt *hostility toward the moral legitimacy of the auction process* undergirds the socialist movements of our era.

C. Predictable Law

The Bible instructs a nation's rulers not to respect persons when administering justice (Deut 1:17). Both the rich man and the poor man, the homeborn and the stranger, are to be ruled by the same law (Ex 12:49). Biblical law is a form of God's grace to mankind; it is to be dispensed to all without prejudice. This is the implication of Leviticus 19:15, which introduced this chapter. The predictability of the judicial system is what God requires of those in positions of authority.

Predictable ("inflexible") law compels the state and the church to declare in advance just exactly what the law requires. This allows men to plan for the future more efficiently. "Flexible" law is another word for *arbitrary* law. When a man drives his automobile at 55 miles per hour in a 55 m.p.h. zone, he expects to be left alone by highway patrol officers. The predictability of the law makes it possible for highway rules to be effective. Men can make better judgments about the decisions of other drivers when speed limits are posted and highway patrol officers enforce them. The better we can plan for the future, the lower the costs of our decision-making. *Predictable law reduces waste*.[28]

The Hebrews were required by God to assemble the nation—rich and poor, children and strangers—every seventh year to listen to the reading of the law (Deut 31:10–13). Ignorance of the law was no excuse. At the same time, biblical law was comprehensible. It was not so complex that only lawyers in specialized areas could grasp its principles. The *case laws*, such as the prohibition on muzzling the ox as he treaded out the corn, brought the general principles down into concrete, familiar terminology. In this sense, biblical faith is essentially a democratic faith, as G. Ernest Wright argues, for

> it can be laid hold of with power by the simplest and most humble. We are surrounded by mystery, and ultimate knowledge is beyond our grasp. Yet

27. Gary North,"Exploitation and Knowledge," *The Freeman* (January 1982), published by the Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington, New York, 10533.

28. Perhaps the most eloquent and scholarly work that argues for the connection between predictable law, human freedom, and economic productivity is the book by the Nobel Prize winner in economics, F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960), esp. the first 15 chapters. See also his trilogy, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973–80).

> God has brought himself (Deut 4:7) and his word to us. We can have life by faith and by loyal obedience to his covenant, even though our knowledge is limited by our finitude. One need not wait to comprehend the universe in order to obtain the promised salvation. It is freely offered in the covenant now.[29]

The law of God gives to men a tool of dominion over an otherwise essentially mysterious nature, including human nature—not dominion as exercised by a lawless tyrant, but dominion through *obedience to God* and *service to man*.[30]

For example, consider the effects of the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." Men are made more secure in the ownership of property. This commandment gives men security. They can then make rational (cost-effective) judgments about the best uses of their property, including their skills. They make fewer mistakes. This lowers the costs of goods to consumers through competition.

Christian commentators have from earliest times understood that the prohibition of theft, like the prohibition against covetousness, serves as a defense of private property. *Theft is a self-conscious, willful act of coercive wealth redistribution, and therefore it is a denial of the legitimacy and reliability of God's moral and economic law-order.*

The immediate economic effect of widespread theft in society is the creation of *insecurity*. This lowers the market value of goods, since people are less willing to bid high prices for items that are likely to be stolen. Uncertainty is increased, which requires that people invest a greater proportion of their assets in buying protection services or devices. Scarce economic resources are shifted from production and consumption to crime fighting. This clearly lowers per capita productivity and therefore per capita wealth, at least among law-abiding people. Theft leads to wasted resources.

The internal restraints on theft that are provided by godly preaching and upbringing help to reduce crime, thereby increasing per capita wealth within the society. *Godly preaching against theft* is therefore a form of *capital investment* for the society as a whole (what the economists call "social overhead capital"), for it releases scarce economic resources that would otherwise have been spent on the protection of private and public property. Such preaching also reduces the neces-

29. G. Ernest Wright, "Deuteronomy," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, p. 509; cited by R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 2, *Law and Liberty* (Vallecito, California: Ross House Books, 1982), p. 413.

30. Rushdoony, *Law and Society*, pp. 403–6.

sary size of the civil government, which is important in reducing the growth of unwarranted state power.

What is true about the reduction of theft is equally true concerning the strengthening of men's commitment to private property in general. When *property rights* are carefully *defined* and *enforced*, the value of property increases. Allen and Alchian, in their standard economics textbook, have commented on this aspect of property rights:

> For market prices to guide allocation of goods, there must be an incentive for people to express and to respond to offers. If it is costly to reveal bids and offers and to negotiate and make exchanges, the gains from exchange might be offset. If each person speaks a different language [as they did at the tower of Babel], if thievery is rampant, or if contracts are likely to be dishonored, then negotiation, transaction, and policing costs will be so high that fewer market exchanges will occur. If *property rights* in goods are weaker, ill-defined, or vague, their reallocation is likely to be guided by lower offers and bids. Who would offer as much for a coat likely to be stolen?[31]

The authors believe that the higher market value attached to goods protected by strong ownership rights spurs individuals to seek laws that will strengthen private-property rights. Furthermore, to the extent that private-property rights exist, the power of the civil government to control the uses of goods is thereby decreased. This, unfortunately, has led politicians and jurists to resist the spread of secured private-property rights.[32]

There is no question that *a society which honors the terms of the commandment against theft will enjoy greater per capita wealth* than one which does not, other things being equal. Such a society rewards honest people with greater possessions. This is as it should be. A widespread hostility to theft, especially from the point of view of self-government (self-restraint), allows men to make more accurate decisions concerning what they want to buy, and therefore what they need to produce in order to offer something of value in exchange for the items they want. Again, I cite Allen and Alchian:

> The more expensive is protection against theft, the more common is thievery. Suppose that thievery of coats were relatively easy. People would be willing to pay only a lower price for coats. The lower market price of coats will understate the value of coats, for it will not include the value to the

31. Armen A. Alchian and William R. Allen, *University Economics: Elements of Inquiry,* 3rd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 141. Italics in the original.

32. *Idem*.

> thief. If the thief were induced to rent or purchase a used coat, the price of coats would more correctly represent their value to society. It follows that the cheaper the policing costs, the greater the efficiency with which values of various uses or resources are revealed. The more likely something is to be stolen, the less of it that will be produced.[33]

When communities set up "neighborhood watches" to keep an eye on each other's homes, and to call the police when something suspicious is going on, the value of property in the community is increased, or at least the value of the property on the streets where the neighbors are helping each other.

We want sellers to respond to our offers for goods or services. At the same time, we as producers want to know what buyers are willing and able to pay for our goods and services. The better everyone's knowledge of the markets we deal in, the fewer the resources necessary for advertising, negotiating, and guessing about the future. These resources can then be devoted to producing goods and services to satisfy wants that would otherwise have gone unsatisfied. The lower our transaction costs, in other words, the more wealth we can devote to the purchase and sale of the items involved in the transactions.

One transaction cost is the defense of property against theft. *God graciously steps in and offers us a "free good": a heavenly system of punishment*. To the extent that criminals and potential criminals believe that God does punish criminal behavior, both on earth and in heaven, their costs of operation go up. When the price of something rises, other things being equal, less of it will be demanded. *God raises the risks ("price") of theft to thieves*. Less criminal behavior is therefore a predictable result of a widespread belief in God's judgments, both temporal and final. When the commandment against theft is preached, and when both the preachers and the hearers believe in the God who has announced his warning against theft, then we can expect less crime and greater per capita wealth in that society. God's eternal criminal justice system is flawless, and it is also inescapable, so it truly is a free good—a gift from God which is a sign of his grace. This is one aspect of *the grace of law*.[34] It leads to increased wealth for those who respect God's laws.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

34. Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (1963; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983).

D. Compulsory Wealth Redistribution

The Bible says, "Thou shalt not steal." It does *not* say, "Thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote." A society which begins to adopt taxation policies that exceed the tithe—10 per cent of income—thereby increases economic uncertainty, as do other types of theft, both public and private. This increase in uncertainty may be even more disrupting, statistically, than losses from burglary or robbery, because private insurance companies can insure against burglary and robbery. After all, *who can trust a civil government which claims the right to take more of a person's income than God requires for the support of his kingdom*? What kind of protection from injustice can we expect from such a civil government? The next wave of politically imposed wealth redistribution is always difficult to predict, and therefore difficult to prepare for, so the costs of production increase.

When Samuel came before the Hebrews to warn them about the evils of establishing a king in Israel, he thought he might dissuade them by telling them that the king would take a whopping 10 per cent of their production (I Sam 8:l5). They did not listen. (And, for the record, neither have Christians listened to warnings against the forty and fifty per cent taxation levels of the modern welfare state.) The Pharaoh of Joseph's day imposed a tax of 20 per cent (Gen 47:24–26). Egypt was one of the great tyrannies of the ancient world.[35] It was probably the most massive bureaucracy in man's history until the twentieth century.[36] Yet every modern welfare state—meaning every Western industrial nation in the late twentieth century—would have to cut its total tax burden by at least *half* in order to return to the twenty per cent level of Egypt in Joseph's day.[37]

E. Foreign Aid: State to State

Foreign aid means an increase in taxes in one nation, so that money can go to other nations. State-to-state aid must go through official, bureaucratic channels. Only in major emergencies—famines, floods,

35. See the study by Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven: Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1957).

36. Lewis Mumford, "The First Megamachine," *Daedalus* (1966); reprinted in Lewis Mumford, *Interpretations and Forecasts: 1922–1972* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973). See also Max Weber, "Max Weber on Bureaucratization" (1909), in J. P. Meyer, *Max Weber and German Politics: A Study in Political Sociology* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956), p. 127.

37. For a discussion of why Joseph's imposition of a twenty per cent tax in Egypt was not part of God's law for Israel, see Gary North, *Dominion Covenant: Genesis,* chap. 23.

earthquakes—do foreign governments allow Western nations to bring food and clothing directly to their citizens. They understand the obvious: The increasing dependence of citizens on goods from a foreign civil government increases their direct dependence on that foreign civil government. He who pays the piper is in a position to call the tune. Oddly enough, intellectual proponents of increased state welfare fail to recognize what leaders in Third World nations understand immediately, namely, "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch." With the benefits come controls and future political or diplomatic obligations.

When the United States sends food under Public Law 480 (passed in 1954), to India, the Indian government, not private businesses, allocates it—or whatever is left after the rats at the docks and in the storage facilities consume approximately half of it. (Rats and sacred cows in India consume half of that nation's agricultural output. It would take a train 3,000 miles long to haul the grain eaten by Indian rats in a single year.[38])

There is a great temptation for government officials of underdeveloped nations to use this food to free up state-controlled capital which is then used to increase investments in heavy industry—investments that produce visible results that are politically popular—projects that cynics refer to as *pyramids*. These large-scale industrial projects are in effect paid for by the food subsidies sent by the West. Without the free food sent by the West, these uneconomical, large-scale projects would be out of the question politically. Even worse, foreign aid enables governments to spend heavily on military equipment that will be used to suppress political opponents or other Third World nations—themselves recipients of Western foreign aid.[39]

What would happen if the West were to stop shipping food at below-market prices? Local farmers in the recipient nations have been hurt—or in some cases, driven into bankruptcy—by the West's below-production-cost food, so they have reduced investments in the agricultural system. These nations have become increasingly dependent on the West's free food. If the subsidies were to cease, the agricultural base might be insufficient to provide for the domestic population, for agricultural output has been reduced as a result of

38. The estimate of Dr. Max Milner of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He says that in one recent year, rats in the Philippine Islands consumed over half the sugar and corn, and ninety per cent of the rice crop."Over 40% of the World's Food Is Lost to Pests," *Washington Post*, 6 March 1977.

39. P. T. Bauer, *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981), p. 94.

taxpayer-financed cut-throat competition from Western governments that gave away the food. At the same time, if the subsidies were to cease, heavy industry projects could also go bankrupt (or, more accurately, may lose even more tax money than they lose already, and therefore become political liabilities).

Let us not be naive about the political impetus for shipments of American farm products under Public Law 480. The farm bloc and the large multinational grain companies are major supporters of the compulsory "charity" of foreign food aid, just as farmers favor the food stamp program. Farmers can sell their crops to the U.S. government at above-market prices, and then the government can give the food away to people who would not have bought it anyway. Politicians like the program also because the U.S. government uses the promise of free food as a foreign policy lever.[40] Government subsidies to agriculture have become a way of life in the United States, as have government controls on agriculture.[41]

We know that foreign governments are hostile to what they refer to as "Western control," when private foreign capital comes into their nations. Why this hostility? *Because pro-socialist political leaders in underdeveloped nations resent the shift of sovereignty from civil government to the private sector, both foreign and domestic*. Yet these same officials beg for more state-to-state aid from the West. Why? Because *they* control the allocation of this form of economic aid after it arrives. The question of foreign aid, like all other forms of compulsory economic redistribution, raises questions of sovereignty.

Should we recommend increased taxes in Western nations in order to "feed the starving poor" in foreign nations? Is this what Christ meant by loving our neighbors? Are Western tax revenues really feeding the starving poor, or are they financing the bureaucratic institutions of political control that have been created by pro-socialist, Western-educated political leaders who dominate so many of the Third World's one-party "democracies"? Are poor people in the West being taxed to provide political support to wealthy politicians in the Third World? Does the Bible teach that state-to-state wealth transfers are ethically valid? Or does the Bible require *personal* charity, or church-to-church charity—charity which is not administered by foreign politicians?

40. For background on the political support for Public Law 480 and the program's use as a tool of American foreign policy, see Dan Morgan, *Merchants of Grain* (New York: Viking, 1979), pp. 100–2, 122–28, 258–68.

41. William Peterson, *The Great Farm Problem* (Chicago: Regnery, 1959).

These are fundamental questions regarding sovereignty, authority, and power. In the construction of the kingdom of God on earth, should we promote the increased sovereignty of the political state? Samuel's warning is clear: *no* (I Sam 8). Any discussion of government "charity"—compulsory wealth redistribution—must deal with this issue of sovereignty. Other questions, closely related to the preceding ones, are these: Is the poverty of the Third World the fault of the West? Is the Third World hungry because people in Western industrial nations eat lots of food? Does the West, meaning Western civil governments, owe some form of reparations (restitution) to Third World civil governments?

F. "We Eat; They Starve"

Consider the words of theologian-historian Ronald Sider, whose best-selling book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, has become one of the most influential books on seminary and Christian college campuses all over the United States. His introduction to the book sets forth the problem:

> The food crisis is only the visible tip of the iceberg. More fundamental problems lurk just below the surface. Most serious is the unjust division of the earth's food and resources. Thirty per cent of the world's population lives in the developed countries. But this minority of less than one-third eats three-quarters of the world's protein each year. Less than 6 per cent of the world's population lives in the United States, but we regularly demand about 33 per cent of most minerals and energy consumed every year. Americans use 191 times as much energy per person as the average Nigerian. Air conditioners alone in the United States use as much energy each year as does the entire country of China annually with its 830 million people. One-third of the world's people have an annual per capita income of $100 or less. In the United States it is now about $5,600 per person. And this difference increases every year.[42]

I can remember reading textbooks written in the 1950s that affirmed the wonders of American capitalism, and that pointed with pride to the fact that 6 per cent of the world's population *produced* 40 per cent (or 33 per cent, or whatever) of the world's goods. But that argument grew embarrassing for those who proclaimed the supposed

42. Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), p. 18. This book was co-published by the liberal Roman Catholic publishing house, the Paulist Press. Unquestionably, it represents an ecumenical publishing venture. Presumably, it reflects the thinking of a broad base of Christian scholars.

productivity of socialism. Socialist nations just never caught up. So, capitalism's critics now complain that 6 per cent of the world's population (Americans) annually *uses up* one-third of the world's annual production, as if this consumption were not simultaneously a process of production, as if production could take place apart from the using up of producer goods. This is *word magic*. It makes productivity appear evil.

It is true that Westerners eat a large proportion of the protein that the world produces each year. This has been used by vegetarian socialists to create a sense of guilt in Western meat-eating readers of socialist literature. You see, our cattle eat protein-rich grains. "Corn-fed beef" is legendary—or notorious, in the eyes of the critics. Because of this, argues Dr. Sider, the "feeding burden" of the United States is not a mere 210 million (the number of human mouths to feed), but 1.6 billion.[43] "No wonder more and more people are beginning to ask whether the world can afford a United States or a Western Europe."[44] (Outside of college and seminary campuses, not many people seem to be asking this question, as far I can see. Certainly the Haitian boat people and Latin American refugees aren't asking it. Neither are Jews who are emigrating from the Soviet Union.)

The psalmist proclaimed a poetic truth about God's ownership of the world by identifying these words as God's: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps 50:10). But "liberation theologians" are not impressed. Dr. Sider informs us:

> The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that when the total life of the animal is considered, each pound of edible beef represents seven pounds of grain. That means that in addition to all the grass, hay and other food involved, it also took seven pounds of grain to produce a typical pound of beef purchased in the supermarket. Fortunately, the conversion rates for chicken and pork are lower: two or three to one for chicken and three or four to one for pork. Beef is the cadillac of meat products. Should we move to compacts?[45]

Must we rewrite the words of the psalm (with the seven-to-one ration in operation): "For every chicken of the forest is mine, and the soybeans upon seven thousand hills"? Perhaps the greatest irony of all is that a 1982 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicates that low-income Americans—the people who liberation theolo-

43. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

gians supposedly want to deliver from "oppressive institutions"—eat more meat per capita than high-income Americans do. Blacks consume more meat per capita than other racial groups do.[46] Thus, the "less meat" program would reduce one of the prime pleasures of the poor in America.

Unquestionably, Third World populations sometimes suffer protein deficiencies. But any program of "social salvation through protein exports" is going to encounter problems that the wealth-redistributionists seldom consider. *People's food is fundamental to their culture*. Trying to stay on a diet has confounded millions of Americans. Eating habits are very difficult to alter, even when the eater knows that he should change. An education program to get Third World peasants to change their diets is going to be incredibly expensive, and probably futile. "Rice-eating people would often rather starve than eat wheat or barley, which are unknown to them," writes biologist Richard Wagner.[47]

This problem goes beyond mere habits. Sometimes we find that people's diets have conditioned their bodies so completely that the introduction of a new food may produce biological hazards for them. This is sometimes the case with protein. Wagner comments:

> Another even more bizarre instance was seen in Colombia, where a population was found with a 40 percent infestation of *Entamoeba histolytica*, a protozoan that generally burrows into the intestinal wall, causing a serious condition called amoebiasis. However, despite the high level of *Entamoeba* infestation, the incidence of amoebiasis was negligible. The answer to this puzzle was found in the high-starch diet of the people. Because of the low protein intake, production of starch-digesting enzymes was reduced, allowing a much higher level of starch to persist in the intestine. The protozoans were found to be feeding on this starch rather than attacking the intestinal wall. If this population had been given protein supplements without concurrent efforts to control *Entamoeba* infestation, the incidence of amoebiasis would probably have soared, causing more problems than the lack of protein.[48]

G. Cultures Are "Package Deals"

When a foreign culture introduces a single aspect of its culture into the life of another, there will be complications. This single change

46. Associated Press story, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, 18 December 1982.

47. Richard H. Wagner, *Environment and Man*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 523.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 518–19.

serves as a sort of *cultural wedge*. As the historian Arnold Toynbee puts it, "In a cultural encounter, one thing inexorably goes on leading to another when once the smallest breach has been made in the assaulted society's defenses."[49] Changing people's eating habits, apart from changing their understanding of medicine, costs of production, agricultural technology, risks of blight, marketing, and an indeterminate number of other contingent aspects of the recommended change, is risky when possible, and frequently impossible.

Third World peasants often recognize the implications of a particular "cultural wedge" perhaps better than the Western "missionary" does: It may have a far-reaching impact on the culture as a whole—an impact which traditional peasants may choose to avoid. Unless the opportunity offered by the innovator is seen by the recipient as being worth the risks of unforeseen "ripple effects," the attempt to force a change in the recipient's buying or eating habits may lead to a disaster. Or, more likely, it will probably lead to a wall of resistance. Missionaries, whether Christian or secular, whether sponsored by a church or the Peace Corps, had better understand one fundamental principle before they go to the mission field: *You cannot change only one thing*.

One of the classic horror stories that illustrates this principle is the Sub-Sahara Sahel famine of the 1970s. This arid and semiarid area is vast. It stretches across the African continent, and it includes the nations of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Ghana, Niger, Upper Volta, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and part of Kenya. For l5 years, from the early 1960s through the mid-1970s, the West's civil governments poured hundreds of millions of dollars into this region. Yet between the late 1960s and 1974, hundreds of thousands of people starved, along with twenty million head of livestock. They are still starving. Why? As with most agricultural tragedies, there was no single cause. The area gets little rain: perhaps twenty-five inches in its southernmost regions, tapering off to an inch per year closer to the Sahara. The nomads needed water for their herds, as they had from time immemorial. The West gave them the water. Here was a totally new factor in the region's ecology. It destroyed them. This was one major cause.

The other cause was the absence of enforceable property rights in land. The nomads did not assign specific plots to specific families.

49. Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and The World and the West* (New York: World, 1958), pp. 286–87.

No one was made personally and economically responsible for the care of the land. "All trees, shrubs, and pasture are *common*-access resources, so no *individual* tribesman has an incentive to conserve them, or add to their stock. No individual can reap the returns of planting or sowing grass, which hold the soil together and prevent 'desertification.'"[50]

Beneath the rock and clay and sand, there is water. A subterranean lake of half a million square miles underlies the eastern end of the Sahara. Drilling rigs can hit water at one thousand or two thousand feet down. These boreholes were drilled with Western foreign aid money at $20,000 to $200,000 apiece. About ten thousand head of cattle at a time can drink their fill. Therein lies the problem. Claire Sterling describes what happened:

> The trouble is that wherever the Sahel has suddenly produced more than enough for the cattle to drink, they have ended up with nothing to eat. Few sights were more appalling, at the height of the drought last summer [1973], than the thousands upon thousands of dead and dying cows clustered around Sahelian boreholes. Indescribably emaciated, the dying would stagger away from the water with bloated bellies to struggle to fight free of the churned mud at the water's edge until they keeled over. As far as the horizon and beyond, the earth was as bare and bleak as a bad dream. Drought alone didn't do that: they did.
>
> What 20 million or more cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels have mostly died of since this grim drought set in is hunger, not thirst. Although many would have died anyway, the tragedy was compounded by a fierce struggle for too little food among Sahelian herds increased by then to vast numbers. Carried away by the promise of unlimited water, nomads forgot about the Sahel's all too limited forage. Timeless rules, apportioning just so many cattle to graze for just so many days within a cow's walking distance of just so much water in traditional wells, were brushed aside. Enormous herds, converging upon the new boreholes from hundreds of miles away, so ravaged the surrounding land by trampling and overgrazing that each borehole quickly became the center of its own little desert forty or fifty miles square.[51]

In Senegal, soon after boreholing became popular (around 1960), the number of cows sheep and goats rose in two years from four million to five million. "In Mali, during the five years before 1960, the increase had been only 800,000. Over the next ten years the total shot

50. John Burton, "Epilogue," in Steven Cheung, *The Myth of Social Cost* (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1980), p. 66.

51. Claire Sterling, "The Making of the Sub-Sahara Wasteland," *Atlantic* (May, 1974), p. 102.

up another 5 million to l6 million, more than three animals for every Malian man, woman, and child."[52] It is not just Americans and West Europeans who raise and eat "protein on the hoof."

The traditional nomad way of life is dead. Western specialists know it; the nomads know it. They live in tent camps now, dependent on handouts from their governments, which in turn rely heavily on the West's foreign aid programs. The West and the nomads forgot to honor (and deal with) this principle: *You cannot change only one thing*.

H. Cultural Transformation

The goal of charitable organizations that deal in foreign aid should be to bring the culture of the West to the underdeveloped nations. By "the culture of the West," I mean the law-order of the Bible, not the humanist, secularized remains of what was once a flourishing Christian civilization. This means that these organizations cannot be run successfully by cultural and philosophical relativists. Missionaries should seek to impart a specifically Western way of looking at the world: future-oriented, thrift-oriented, education-oriented, and responsibility-oriented. This world-and-life view must not be cyclical. It must offer men hope in the power of human reason to understand the external world and to grasp the God-given laws of cause and effect that control it. It must offer hope for the future. It must be *future-oriented*. To try to bring seed corn to a present-oriented culture that will eat it is futile. With the seed corn must come a world-and-life view that will encourage people to grow corn for the future.

It does little good to give these cultures Western medicine and not Western attitudes toward personal hygiene and public health. It does little good to send them protein-rich foods if their internal parasites will eat out their intestines. The naive idea that we can simply send them money and they will "take off into self-sustained economic growth" cannot be taken seriously any longer.[53] To attack the West because voters are increasingly unwilling to continue to honor the tenets of a naive faith in state-to-state aid—faith in the power of political confiscation, faith in the power of using Western tax revenues to prop up socialist regimes in Third World nations—is unfair.[54]

52. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

53. W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960). This was a best-seller on college campuses in the early 1960s. For a critique, see the essays by several economic historians in Rostow, ed., *The Economics of Take-Off into Sustained Growth* (New York: St. Martin's, 1963).

54. Examples of socialist (centrally planned) economies that have been propped up

P. T. Bauer of the London School of Economics made the study of economic development his life's work. He emphasized what all economists should have known, but what very few acknowledged until quite recently, namely, that in the long run, people's *attitudes* are more important for economic growth than money. His list of what ideas and attitudes *not* to subsidize with Western capital is comprehensive. No program of foreign aid, whether public or private, should be undertaken apart from an educational program to reduce men's faith in the following attitudes. These attitudes are favorable to the development of a society that will experience economic growth.

> Examples of significant attitudes, beliefs and modes of conduct unfavourable to material progress include lack of interest in material advance, combined with resignation in the face of poverty; lack of initiative, self-reliance and a sense of personal responsibility for the economic future of oneself and one's family; high leisure preference, together with a lassitude found in tropical climates; relatively high prestige of passive or contemplative life compared to active life; the prestige of mysticism and of renunciation of the world compared to acquisition and achievement; acceptance of the idea of a preordained, unchanging and unchangeable universe; emphasis on performance of duties and acceptance of obligations, rather than on achievement of results, or assertion or even a recognition of personal rights; lack of sustained curiosity, experimentation and interest in change; belief in the efficacy of supernatural and occult forces and of their influence over one's destiny; insistence on the unity of the organic universe, and on the need to live with nature rather than conquer it or harness it to man's needs, an attitude of which reluctance to take animal life is a corollary; belief in perpetual reincarnation, which reduces the significance of effort in the course of the present life; recognized status of beggary, together with a lack of stigma in the acceptance of charity; opposition to women's work outside the home.[55]

A long sentence, indeed. If the full-time promoters of Western guilt understood the implications of what Bauer is saying, there would be

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by U.S. government aid are Costa Rica, Uruguay, El Salvador, and Ghana. See Melvyn B. Krauss, *Development Without Aid: Growth, Poverty and Government* (New York: New Press, McGraw-Hill, 1983), pp. 24–32. Another example is Zaire (formerly the Belgian Congo). Consider also that government-guaranteed loans, as well as below-market loans through such agencies as the Export-Import Bank, constitute foreign aid, for banks loan investors' dollars to high-risk socialist nations that would otherwise not have been loaned. The Soviet Bloc has done exceedingly well in this regard for decades. On this point, see Antony Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development*, 3 vols. (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, 1968–73).

55. P. T. Bauer, *Dissent on Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 78–79.

greater hope for both the West and the Third World. What he describes is essentially the very opposite of what has come to be known as "the Protestant Ethic."[56] What is remarkable is the extent to which *ideologically motivated guilt-manipulators have adopted so many of the very attitudes that Bauer says are responsible for the economic backwardness of the Third World*.

Yes, the West continues to eat. The Third World finds it difficult to grow sufficient food. But Christians in the West are supposedly complacent. They are well-fed, while their "global neighbors" go hungry.[57] It appears that the ancestors of "rich Christians" and rich Westerners in general were very smart: They all moved to those regions of the world where food is now abundant. The Plains Indians, before Europeans came on the scene, experienced frequent famines. There were under half a million of them at the time.[58] Yet, somehow, European immigrants to the Plains arrived just in time to see agricultural productivity flourish. They now consume more than their "fair share" of the food, and their only excuse is that they produce it. This, it seems, is not a good enough answer—certainly not a morally valid answer. The West needs to come up with a cure for the hungry masses of the world, but *not* the one that worked in the West, namely, *the private ownership of the means of production*.

Ronald Sider has a cure—if not for the world's hungry masses, then at least for the now-guilty consciences of his readers, not to mention the not-yet-guilt-burdened consciences of the American electorate. "We ought to move toward a personal lifestyle that could be sustained for a long period of time if it were shared by everyone in the world. In its controversial *Limits to Growth*, the Club of Rome suggested the figure of $1,800 per year per person. In spite of the many weaknesses of that study, the Club of Rome's estimate may be the best available."[59] And which agencies should be responsible for collecting the funds and sending them to the poor in foreign lands? United

56. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). This book appeared originally as a series of scholarly journal articles in 1904–5. See also S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

57. Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. 30.

58. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Myth of Over-Population* (1969; reprint ed., Fairfax, Va.: Thoburn Press, 1978), pp. 1–3.

59. Ronald J. Sider, "Living More Simply for Evangelism and Justice," the Keynote Address to the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle, England (17–20 March 1980), mimeographed paper, p. 17.

Nations channels.[60] Private charity is acceptable—indeed, it is better than the United States government, which sends food and supplies to "repressive dictatorships"[61]—but not preferable. We need state-enforced "institutional change," not reliance on private charity, because "institutional change is often morally better. Personal charity and philanthropy still permit the rich donor to feel superior. And it makes the recipient feel inferior and dependent. Institutional changes, on the other hand, give the oppressed rights and power."[62]

But if the United States government is not really a reliable state to impose such institutional change, what compulsory agency is reliable? He neglects to say. The one agency he mentions favorably in this context is the United Nations—the organization which has formally indicted Israel as a "racist" nation, and which welcomed the Palestine Liberation Organization's Yassir Arafat, pistol on his hip, to speak before the membership.[63]

It is interesting that the Club of Rome drastically revised its no-growth position in 1976,[64] and in 1977, the year *Rich Christians* was published, the Club of Rome published a pro-growth, pro-technology study.[65] As William Tucker observes, "When you're leading the parade, it's always fun to make sudden changes in direction just to try to keep everyone on their toes."[66] Of course, it was favorable to vast state-to-state foreign aid programs.

I. A Zero-Sum Economy?

A zero-sum game is a game in which the winners' earnings come exclusively from the losers. But what applies to a game of chance does not apply to an economy based on voluntary exchange. Unfortunately, many critics of the free market society still cling to this ancient dogma. They assume that if one person profits from a transaction, the other person loses proportionately. Mises objects:

60. Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. 216.

61. *Idem*.

62. Sider, "Ambulance Drivers or Tunnel Builders" (Philadelphia: Evangelicals for Social Action, n.d.), p. 4.

63. For a critical analysis of Sider's views, see David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald Sider*, rev. ed. (Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1982). The book is now in the third edition, reprinted in 1996.

64. *Time*, 26 April 1976.

65. Jan Tinbergen (coordinator), *RIO—Reshaping the International Order: A Report to the Club of Rome* (New York: New American Library, Signet Books, 1977).

66. William Tucker, *Progress and Privilege: America in the Age of Environmentalism* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982), p. 193.

> *. . . the gain of one man is the damage of another; no man profits but by the loss of others*. This dogma was already advanced by some ancient authors. Among modern writers Montaigne was the first to restate it; we may fairly call it the *Montaigne dogma*. It was the quintessence of the doctrines of Mercantilism, old and new. It is at the bottom of all modern doctrines teaching that there prevailed, within the frame of the market economy, an irreconcilable conflict among the interests of various social classes within a nation and furthermore between the interests of any nation and those of all other nations. . . .
>
> What produces a man's profit in the course of affairs within an unhampered market society is not his fellow citizen's plight and distress, but the fact that he alleviates or entirely removes what causes his fellow citizen's feeling of uneasiness. What hurts the sick is the plague, not the physician who treats the disease. The doctor's gain is not an outcome of the epidemics, but of the aid he gives to those affected. The ultimate source of profits is always the foresight of future conditions. Those who succeeded better than others in anticipating future events and in adjusting their activities to the future state of the market, reap profits because they are in a position to satisfy the most urgent needs of the public. The profits of those who have produced goods and services for which the buyers scramble are not the source of losses of those who have brought to the market commodities in the purchase of which the public is not prepared to pay the full amount of production costs expended. These losses are caused by the lack of insight displayed in anticipating the future state of the market and the demand of the consumers.[67]

The "Montaigne dogma" is still with us. The economic analysis presented by Ronald Sider assumes it. He can be regarded as a dogmatic theologian, but *his dogma is Montaigne's*. Consider for a moment his statistics, such as the Club of Rome's assertion that $1,800 a year would just about equalize the living standards of the world. The Club of Rome assumes tremendous per capita wealth in the hands of the rich—so much wealth, that a program of compulsory wealth-redistribution could make the whole world middle class, or at least reasonably comfortable. But the capital of the West—roads, educational institutions, communications networks, legal systems, banking facilities, monetary systems, manufacturing capital, managerial skills, and attitudes toward life, wealth, and the future—cannot be divided up physically. Furthermore, there is little evidence that it would be sufficient to produce world-wide per capita wealth of this magnitude, even if it could be physically divided up and redistributed.[68]

If we divided only the *shares of ownership* held by the rich—stocks,

67. Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, pp. 664–65. Italics in original.
68. Gary North, "Trickle-Down Economics," *The Freeman* (May 1982).

bonds, annuities, pension rights, cash-value life insurance policies, and so forth—we would see a market-imposed redistribution process begin to put the shares back into the hands of the most efficient producers. The *inequalities of ownership* would rapidly reappear.

The important issue, however, is the Montaigne dogma. It views the world as a zero-sum game, in which winnings exactly balance losses. Then how do societies advance? *If life is a zero-sum game, how can we account for economic growth*? A free market economy is not a zero-sum game. We exchange with each other because we expect to gain an advantage. Both parties expect to be better off after the exchange has taken place. Each party offers an opportunity to the other person. If each person did not expect to better himself, neither would make the exchange. *There is no fixed quantity of economic benefits. The free market economy is not a zero-sum game*.

We understand this far better in the field of education. For example, if I learn that two plus two equals four, I have not harmed anyone. In the area of knowledge, we all know that the only people who lose when someone gains new, accurate knowledge are those who have invested in terms of older, inaccurate knowledge. Could anyone seriously argue that the acquisition of knowledge is a zero-sum game (except, perhaps, in the case of a competitive examination)? Would anyone argue that we should suppress the spread of new, accurate knowledge in order to protect those who have made unfortunate investments in terms of old information?

What should we conclude? The Third World needs what all men need: *faith in Jesus Christ and his law-order*. The Third World needs the increased economic output that is the inevitable product of true conversion to Christ. It needs a new attitude toward the future (optimism). It needs a new attitude concerning the power of biblical law as a tool of dominion. It needs to abandon the bureaucratic state agricultural control systems that pay farmers only a fraction of what their agricultural output is worth, with the difference going into state treasuries. It is not uncommon for West African governments to pay producers as little as *fifty per cent* of the market value of their crops.[69]

What the Third World needs is what we all need: less guilt, less civil government, lower taxes, more freedom, and churches that enforce the tithe through the threat of excommunication[70]—not a "grad-

69. P. T. Bauer, *Dissent on Development*, pp. 401–3.

70. Note, 2005: I have changed my mind on this point. The threat should not be excommunication but rather revocation of voting rights in the congregation.

uated tithe," but a fixed, predictable ten per cent of income. (A "graduated tithe" means a graduated ten per cent, which is contradictory. It is a political slogan, not a theological concept. It certainly is not a standard for state taxation: I Sam 8.)

J. Land Reform

We are told endlessly that Latin American nations need land reform. The government is supposed to intervene, confiscate the landed wealth of the aristocracy, and give it to the poor. This is a variation of Lenin's old World War I slogan, "peace, land, bread." [Note: in 2003 I discovered on my own that Lenin seems never to have used this slogan.] Is such a program legitimate? Is it practical?

The Bible has a standard for land tenure: private ownership. First, how can we respect this principle and still expand the holdings of land by the peasants? Second, how can we keep agricultural output from collapsing when unskilled, poor peasants take over land tenure?

The answer to the first question is relatively simple in theory: We need to adopt the biblical principle of inheritance. All sons receive part of the inheritance, with the eldest son obtaining a double portion, since he has the primary responsibility for caring for aged parents. Rushdoony's comments are important:

> The general rule of inheritance was limited primogeniture, i.e., the oldest son, who had the duty of providing for the entire family in case of need, or of governing the clan, receiving a double portion. If there were two sons, the estate was divided into three portions, the younger son receiving one third. . . . The father could not alienate a godly first-born son because of personal feelings, such as a dislike for the son's mother and a preference for a second wife (Deut 21:15–17). Neither could he favor an ungodly son, an incorrigible delinquent, who deserved to die (Deut 21:18–21). Where there was no son, the inheritance went to the daughter or daughters (Num 27:1–11). . . . If there were neither sons nor daughters, the next of kin inherited (Num 27:9–11).[71]

By instituting the biblical mode of inheritance, the great landed estates of the Latin American world would be broken up. The civil government would immediately gain the support of the younger sons of the aristocracy. Land holdings would get smaller. Those sons who choose not to farm can sell their land to productive peasants, or if the poor people have no capital initially, hire them as sharecroppers. (In

71. R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, N.J.: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 180–81.

a capital-poor society, such as the American South immediately after the Civil War, sharecropping proved to be an economically sound arrangement.)[72] The sons can buy the necessary capital, assuming they do not inherit it.

With each death, the land holdings get smaller. Will this lead to the destruction of productive, large-scale agriculture? Not if it is really productive. The size of land holdings could be increased by purchase by productive farmers. Also, corporations could be set up that would issue shares of stock to owners. The holders would leave shares of stock to their heirs, not the actual land. Then heirs could sell these shares to other people, including members of the rising middle class. Without single-inheritor primogeniture, there could be a rising middle class.

One of the preludes to the American Revolution, especially in southern colonies, was the abolition of the English version of eldest-son primogeniture.[73] Puritan New England never did adhere to eldest-son primogeniture. Historian Kenneth Lockridge writes:

> The leaders of the [Massachusetts Bay] colony reflected a general awareness of the unique abundance of the New World in the novel inheritance law they created. In England, the lands of a man who left no will would go to the eldest son under the law of primogeniture, whose aim was to prevent the fragmentation of holdings which would follow from a division among all the sons. The law arose from a mentality of scarcity. It left the landless younger sons to fend for themselves. In New England the law provided for the division of the whole estate among all the children of the deceased. Why turn younger sons out on the society without land or perhaps daughters without a decent dowry, why invite social disorder, when there was enough to provide for all?[74]

There was never a landed aristocracy in the New England because of this policy. Primogeniture and entail (prohibiting the from selling

72. Blacks preferred sharecropping to working for wages on white-owned farms: Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 67–70.

73. Robert Nisbet, the conservative American sociologist, concludes that the abolition of primogeniture and entail (fixing land to the family line) was an important symbol of the American Revolution. He admits, however, that few of the colonies in 1775 were still enforcing these laws. Nisbet, "The Social Impact of the Revolution," in *America's Continuing Revolution: An Act of Conservation* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), p. 80. Nisbet cites Frederick Le Play and Alexis de Tocqueville as sources for his opinion on the importance of the abolition of primogeniture and entail, pp. 82–83.

74. Kenneth A. Lockeridge, *A New England Town, The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636–1736* (New York: Norton, 1970), pp. 71–72.

the land) disappeared in all but two colonies prior to the American Revolution.

I offer this example of one possible social and economic reform to demonstrate how relevant biblical law is for all societies, and how a deviation from biblical law has led, over centuries, to the creation of a ticking time bomb in Latin American nations. Instead of broadly based private property in land, and the development of a responsible middle class, Latin American nations now face the likelihood of Marxist revolution, with the state, not the people, gaining control over the land. As Rushdoony remarks, "The state, moreover, is making itself progressively the main, and in some countries, the only heir. The state in effect is saying that it will receive the blessing above all others. It offers to educate all children and to support all needy families as the great father of all. It offers support to the aged as the true son and heir who is entitled to collect all of the inheritance as his own. In both roles, however, it is the great corrupter and is at war with God's established order, the family."[75]

Conclusion

God's law is clear enough: *The family is the primary agency of welfare*—in education, law enforcement (by teaching biblical law and self-government), care for the aged. The church, as the agency for collecting the tithe, also has social welfare obligations.[76] The civil government has almost none. Even in the case of the most pitiable people in Israel, the lepers, the state had only a negative function, namely, to quarantine then from other citizens. The state provided no medical care or other tax-supported aid (Lev 13 and 14).[77]

The balance of earthly sovereignties between the *one* (the state or church) and the *many* (individuals, voluntary associations) is mandatory if we are to preserve both freedom and order. The Bible tells us that God is both one and many, one Being yet three Persons. His creation reflects this unity and diversity. Our social and political institutions are to reflect this. We are to seek neither total unity (statism)

75. *Ibid*., p. 181. See also Gary North, "Familistic Capital," in the forthcoming book, *The Dominion Covenant: Exodus* (Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), forthcoming. [The book was eventually titled, *Moses and Pharaoh: Dominion Religion vs. Power Religion*, 1985.]

76. James B. Jordan, "Tithing: Financing Christian Reconstruction," in Gary North, ed., *Tactics of Christian Resistance* (Tyler, Tex.: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983).

77. Gary North, "Quarantines and Public Health," *Chalcedon Report* (April 1977).

nor total diversity (anarchism).[78] Biblical law provides us with the guidelines by which we may achieve a balanced social order. We must take biblical law seriously.[79]

The most effective social movements of the twentieth century's masses—Marxism, Darwinian science, and militant Islam—have held variations of the three doctrines that are crucial for any comprehensive program of social change: *providence*, *law*, and *optimism*. The Christian faith offers all three of these, not in a secular framework, but in a revelational framework. The failure of Christianity to capture the minds of the masses, not to mention the world's leaders, is in part due to the unwillingness of the representatives of Christian orthodoxy to preach all three with uncompromising clarity. *The world will stay poor for as long as men cling to any vision of God, man, and law that is in opposition to the biblical outline*.

We need faith in the meaning of the universe and the sovereignty of God. We need confidence that biblical law offers us a reliable tool of dominion. Finally, we need an historical dynamic: optimism. We need a positive future-orientation for our earthly efforts, in eternity of course, but also in time and on earth. People need to surrender unconditionally to God in order to exercise comprehensive dominion, under God and in terms of God's law, over the creation.[80] There is no other long-term solution to long-term poverty. God will not be mocked.

78. R. J. Rushdoony, *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* (1971; reprint ed., Fairfax, Va.: Thoburn Press, 1978).

79. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*.

80. Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Tex.: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1983). See also Roderick Campbell, *Israel and the New Covenant* (1954; reprint ed., Tyler, Tex.: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982).

APPENDIX F

THE ECONOMIC RE-EDUCATION OF RONALD J. SIDER[1]

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

ISAIAH 8:20

I began this economic commentary project in the spring of 1973: monthly essays in the *Chalcedon Report*. I escalated it in August of 1977, when I moved to Durham, North Carolina. At that time, I began to devote 10 hours a week, 50 weeks a year, to this commentary project. I still do.

In that same year, 1977, another historian, Ronald J. Sider, had his book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*, co-published by the Paulist Press (liberal Roman Catholic) and InterVarsity Press (neo-evangelical Protestant). The fate of these rival publishing projects throws light on contemporary Protestant evangelical theology.

In mid-1997, the fourth edition of Sider's book appeared. On the cover, it proclaims: "Over 350,000 copies in print." Most of these copies were the first edition. The original publishers surrendered control over it in 1990, when Word Books picked it up and issued the third edition. Publishers do not surrender books that are still selling well. The second edition was forced on Sider in 1984 by David Chilton's book, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators* (1981), which I hired Chilton to write and which the Institute for Christian Economics published. Sider prudently refused to mention Chilton in that second edition . . . also in the third edition/latest edition.

1. Published first as an Institute for Christian Economics report in 1997.

A. He Changed His Mind

In a *Christianity Today* interview, published in the same issue as an obituary for David Chilton (April 28, 1997), Sider made it clear that he no longer was of the same opinion as he had been in 1977. "The times have changed, and so have I" (p. 68). Furthermore, "I admit, though, that I didn't know a great deal of economics when I wrote the first edition of *Rich Christians*" (pp. 68–69). Or, he could accurately have added, the second and third editions. It is clear who his nemesis has been since 1981, the unnamed David Chilton: "I had no interest in trying to psychologically manipulate people into some kind of false guilt" (p. 68). Chilton had recognized the appeal to guilt throughout Sider's book. Sider now said that this was not his intention.

What happened to change his mind? First, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989; second, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Times had changed, and so had he. Like so many academics who switched in the 1990s, he no longer argues for socialism. It was not David Chilton's arguments that persuaded him; it was a shift in liberalism's climate of opinion, and therefore academic neo-evangelicalism's opinions.

Sider's popularity began to fade about the time ICE published Chilton's book. Chilton's writing style—he was a master of clarity as well as rhetoric—his mastery of the Bible,[2] and his mastery of free market economics turned Sider's book into a retroactive embarrassment. I heard the following on many occasions: "I don't believe everything in Sider's book, but don't you think Chilton went to extremes?" Obviously, I didn't. Strong rhetoric catches people's attention. This was true of Sider's first edition, too. He used very strong rhetoric—most of which disappeared from the 1997 edition. If strong rhetoric is backed up by proof, it will accomplish its task far more effectively than the verbal equivalent of lukewarm oatmeal. Chilton's book was designed to teach biblical free market principles by means of a public dissection of a popular anti-free market book. Chilton's book did its work well. It sold better than any book that ICE ever published. I thought at the time that it was an almost perfect book. I still do.[3]

Let me use an analogy. To stop a group of amateur sportsmen from going over a waterfall in a rented motor boat, you have to yell really

2. I sat in an office next to his. I would yell, "David, where is that passage about . . .?" He would yell back, "It's somewhere in the middle of chapter [ ] of the Book of [ ]." It always was.

3. The fatter revised edition is longer and a bit harder to read, for it had to respond to Sider's second edition, the one that included "a response to my critics," except Chilton.

loud and wave your arms at them. They may complain later about all the undignified shouting and waving, but they may pull over to the shore. Even Sider pulled over, although not because of Chilton's shouting or mine. His ideology's outboard motor just broke down—a familiar experience with socialist products. He has now publicly tossed this burnt-out motor overboard. He deserves credit for this.

Still, he really owed it to his readers to have written something like this at the beginning of the new edition: "David Chilton was basically correct in his criticisms of my economic views. I have adopted many of his proposals, including the following:…" But there is not a word about Chilton or his book. This is consistent with the second and third editions.

B. Sider Led an Ideological Exodus

We are all familiar with the student who goes off to college and comes home after the first year spouting liberal nonsense that he learned in the classroom. This phenomenon has been around since the days of classical Greece. Aristophanes wrote a comedy about such a youth: *Clouds*. A young man goes off to Socrates' academy and then comes home a know-it-all jerk. Students usually get over this phase by age 30 unless they go to graduate school. In graduate school, the damage to both common sense and moral sense can become permanent.

The Christian version of this tale is the youth who comes home spouting nonsense and quoting the Bible out of context to defend his views. Maybe he quotes Israel's jubilee law (Lev. 25) as a model of state-directed wealth-redistribution. No one told him that the jubilee's legal basis was genocide: the destruction of an entire civilization by the Israelites, i.e., wealth-distribution by military conquest. No one told him that the same jubilee law authorized the permanent enslavement of foreigners and their children (Lev. 25:44–46).

He insists that he is still a Christian, but he declares that a Christian can be a liberal: an in-your-face, in-your-wallet, tax collector's gun-in-your-belly kind of liberal. He announces, in so many words, "You'll have to pay; government gets to spend the money on the poor (after skimming off 50% for handling); and it's all in the name of Jesus. Jesus loves a cheerful taxpayer."

With the publication of *Rich Christians* in 1977, Ronald Sider became the Moses of the American Protestant evangelicals' version of this kind of home-from-college liberal. (By 1977, John R. Stott had long served this role in England.) The trouble was, Sider never came home from college: he was still there—teaching. He led the neo-evan-

gelicals in a unique kind of exodus: out of the fundamentalist prayer closets of their youth. They thought they were on the cutting edge of a new, caring kind of Christianity. They imagined that they were headed into the Promised Land of social relevance and political influence. They believed that their students would follow them. The students did, too, for about three years. Then they changed their minds, voted for Ronald Reagan, and went into real estate development or the brokerage business. (This, too, shall pass, but that is another story.)

The original version of *Rich Christians* was a tract for the times. They were rotten times, ideologically speaking. The economic debate, as far as Christian intellectuals knew, was between Keynesians and Marxists. Not today. Everything has changed. Marxism is dead. Keynesianism is in its terminal stages, taking tiny, halting steps like an octogenarian with a walker. Sider recognized this, and he turned back toward what he used to call Egypt. "No, no: the Promised Land lies in *this* direction!" Most of this army turned back in the 1980s, and they have bought up all the choice real estate.

Sider began his revised edition with this admission: "My thinking has changed. I've learned more about economics."[4] So have his former readers. Socialist radicalism has fallen out of favor all over the world. The climate of opinion in the liberal media changed in 1991. Ron Sider changed right along with it. I think of Joe Sobran's warning: he would rather be in a church that has not changed its beliefs in 5,000 years than in one that spends its days huffing and puffing to catch up with the latest shift in media opinion.

The 20th edition is barely recognizable. It even has a new subtitle: *Moving from Affluence to Generosity*. The earlier editions had been subtitled, *A Biblical Study*. The new subtitle is less pretentious. It also sounds more private than statist, which reflects the book's perspective.

Here is an example of just how much the book has changed. You may remember Sider's call to statist action on behalf of the poor. His argument in 1977 was this: God is on the side of the poor. "... the God of the Bible is on the side of the poor just because he is *not* biased, for he is a God of impartial justice."[5] What did he say in 1997? "Is God biased in favor of the poor? Is he on their side in a way that he is not on the side of the rich? Some theologians say yes. But until we clarify

4. Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Dallas: Word, 1997), p. xiii.

5. Ronald L. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 84.

the meaning of the question, we cannot answer it correctly."[6] The next chapter backpeddles away from the first edition.

In his 1985 edition, Chilton summarized Sider's policy recommendations, and he offered footnotes from *Rich Christians* for every point: national (state) food policy, (state to state) foreign aid, a guaranteed national income, international taxation, land reform, bureaucratically determined "just prices," national health care, population control, and the right of developing nations to nationalize foreign holdings.[7] In Sider's 1997 edition, foreign aid is mentioned briefly (pp. 31–38). But even here, Sider cited reports on how recipient governments have misused this aid in the past. Sider used the same kind of bureaucratic examples that Chilton used against Sider's early editions (pp. 258–59). As for the recycled oil money loaned to the Third World, "Too much of what was loaned was spent on armaments, ill-planned projects, or wasted because of official corruption" (p. 260). He still mentioned land reform, but only briefly (p. 260). He wanted lower tariffs against foreign products. He was adamant about this.[8] This was Chilton's suggestion.[9]

As he became more cautious—openly so—he dropped almost all traces of his previous toying with socialism and statist coercion. The new edition was not the same book. It was not even a first cousin of the first three editions. His new edition was basically a retraction of the earlier editions—a kind of belated apology to the 350,000 buyers of his book who bought intellectually damaged goods.

But he still refused to mention Chilton's book, even in the bibliography. He reminds me of Winston Smith in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, who dutifully dropped inconvenient historical information into the "memory hole." Nevertheless, the new bibliography contained some very good books by such fine free market scholars as P. T. Bauer—to whom Chilton dedicated the third edition, since Bauer was a big fan of *Productive Christians*[10]—George Gilder, Brian Griffiths,[11] Julian Simon, and Calvin Beisner. Unfortunately, he did not actually

6. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1997), p. 41.

7. David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald J. Sider* , 3rd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), p. 35.

8. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1997), pp. 147–50, 244–45.

9. Chilton, *Productive Christians*, pp. 101–103.

10. He called Chilton on the phone at least once to tell him how much he liked the book. Chilton had initially thought it was someone who was pulling a trick on him.

11. When I visited him in 1985—the day that Margaret Thatcher's policy unit hired him as an advisor—Prof. Griffiths told me that he had not heard about Christian economics until he read my Introduction to *Christian Economics*.

quote from any of these authors in his 37 pages of endnotes, except to attack Bauer as an extremist.[12] He quoted mainly from UNICEF, other United Nations agencies, and the World Bank. He still avoided citing economists generally and free market economists specifically. But at least his bibliography gave the illusion that he had thought through the reasons why his first three editions were wrong.

How did this happen? I attribute it to a dramatic shift in the climate of public opinion. This climate of opinion was beginning to change in 1981, when Chilton's book appeared and when I debated Sider at Gordon-Conwell Divinity School. But it was not yet changing among Christian academics. They follow the lead of secular humanist opinion leaders, usually by about five to 10 years. I was not well received by the faculty of Gordon-Conwell (or at any other seminary, now that I think of it).

C. Harbinger and Fad

Sider's book was part harbinger, part fad. It was a harbinger of things to come because, in 1977, Protestant evangelicals were just barely coming back into American politics as an identifiable voting bloc. The 1976 Presidential candidacy of Southern Baptist and Trilateral Commission member Jimmy Carter had made acceptable the label "evangelical" in the political arena. A majority of white Southern Protestants actually voted against Carter, but hardly anyone recognized this in 1977 or even today. The pundits incorrectly attributed his victory to the unpredicted appearance of the evangelicals.[13]

From the era of the media-orchestrated humiliation of fundamentalist Christianity at the Scopes' "monkey" trial in 1925 until the election of 1976, American evangelicals had been conspicuous by their absence.[14] They generally opposed politics, or at least identifiably

12. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1997), p. 307.

13. He won mainly because Gerald Ford had been a Vice President who came into office because of Richard Nixon's 1974 resignation under a cloud of scandal. Ford immediately pardoned Nixon for unnamed crimes that Nixon had not been tried for. Then the 1975 recession hit. Meanwhile, the newly created Trilateral Commission went looking for a political unknown who could be palmed off on the scandal-weary American voters as an outsider. This strategy worked, but only for one election.

14. See Gary North, *Crossed Fingers: How the Liberals Captured the Presbyterian Church* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1996), chaps. 7, 9. Cf. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 184–86; Ralph Reed, *After the Revolution: How the Christian Coalition is Impacting America* (Dallas: Word, 1996), p. 53. Note that Reed's publisher was also Sider's.

Christian participation in partisan politics. Roman Catholics did that sort of thing, it was widely believed, "and you know what we think about Catholicism!" For decades, political liberals who controlled the theologically liberal National Council of Churches had chided fundamentalists, calling on them to get out of their prayer closets and get active in politics. They got their wish answered in 1980: the election of Ronald Reagan, whose personal commitment to salvation through faith in Christ was never proclaimed by him in public, and by his defeat of Carter, whose public commitment to Christ was considered media-worthy, but whose personal commitment was to theologians such as Paul Tillich. The National Council crowd never knew what hit them. Reagan stood firm, at least rhetorically, against the NCC's version of the eighth commandment: "Thou shalt not steal, except by majority vote." He was re-elected in 1984. The NCC has never recovered. Like some emphysemic middle-aged athlete still dreaming of his glory days, the NCC continues to issue study guides and newsletters. No one pays any attention.

1. Sider and Social Action

Immediately after my debate with Sider at Gordon-Conwell, a reporter privately asked me what I thought of Sider. I told him that I appreciated Sider for softening up the market for my work. I told him that Sider was preparing the way for evangelicals to get involved in social action and politics, but that my economic opinions, not Sider's, were representative of the broad mass of evangelical opinion. That statement had been verified the previous fall, with Reagan's defeat of Carter. Sider had been part of the minority of white evangelicals who were favorable to Carter's worldview and hostile to Reagan's. Sider's fame was based on the opinion of classroom professors and liberal arts editors, what I have referred to as the Wheaton College-*Christianity Today*-Calvin College axis. This cloistered non-profit community of liberal arts graduates is part of the modern chattering class, but it never has reflected the opinions of donors in the pews. The man in the pew always knew that socialism is simply Communism for people without the testosterone to man the barricades.

I have maintained for four decades that neo-evangelicals pick up fads that have been discarded by secular liberals. Sider's book is proof. The tenured academic community of Christians was mildly socialistic when the American media were. Now they are mildly free market, just as the media are. What caused the change? The failure of

the Soviet Union. Mr. Gorbachev admitted in the late 1980s that his nation was economically bankrupt. This stunned the West's academics. They had always insisted that the USSR had a growing economy. Only a handful of free market economists had questioned this. In 1991, Gorbachev was unceremoniously thrown out of power. So were the Communists. They had neither money nor power by August 21, 1991, the day the Communist coup against Boris Yeltsin failed. With neither money nor power, Communism fell out of favor in the West overnight. The secular humanist West worships money and power. Lose these, and you're instantly passé.

Overnight, discount book bins filled up with Marxist books written by and for the college market. Marxists in the Western academic community found that their peers were laughing at them. Never before had this happened. They had always been taken seriously. Why? Because the Communists had the power to terrorize people without threat of retaliation, and Western liberals have great respect for this degree of power. They had raged for decades selectively only against military dictatorships in small nations—dictatorships that might be overthrown. Now the "impersonal forces of history" had turned against the Communists. This was bad news for tenured professors who had publicly worshipped the forces of history, as reported by the *New York Times*. They rushed in panic to get on board the last train out of socialism's world of empty promises and emptier souls.

They have now become born-again democratic capitalists. What is a democratic capitalist? Someone who has modified the eight commandment as follows: "Thou shalt not steal quite so much as before, except by majority vote."

2. The Echo Effect: Neo-evangelicalism

Sider's book was partly a fad because it promoted a kind of warmed-over political liberalism that suited the times. In 1977, Jimmy Carter had just been elected President of the United States. He was a political liberal, and he was a self-proclaimed evangelical, despite his commitment to neo-orthodox theologians. Two years later, Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of Great Britain. In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States. Those two politicians restructured political rhetoric in the West. They made political conservatism acceptable. More important, they made liberals look both weak and silly. They oversaw major shifts in public opinion,

even among intellectuals. In the year of Reagan's retirement,[15] the Berlin Wall was torn down, and the East German troops did nothing to stop it, as if in response to Reagan's words to Mikhail Gorbachev: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Gorbachev sat tight. Two years after that, he was thrown out of office, along with Communism.

Overnight, the liberation theology fad died. Marxism became passé—the ultimate humiliation in the modern intellectual world. This was the year after the third edition of Sider's book appeared, which sank without a trace. Ronald Reagan had destroyed the climate of opinion that had made Ronald Sider's book a best-seller among college-educated Christian evangelicals. Reagan had destroyed Sider's market as surely as David Chilton had destroyed Sider's arguments. Sider admitted as much: "Communism has collapsed. Expanding market economies and new technologies have reduced poverty. 'Democratic capitalism' has won the major economic/political debate of the twentieth century. Communism's state ownership and central planning have proven not to work; they are inefficient and totalitarian."[16] This was what David Chilton had argued back in 1981. Sider wrote: "One of the last things we needed was another ghastly Marxist-Leninist experiment in the world."[17] Yet in 1977, he offered this bold-faced, capitalized question: **IS GOD A MARXIST?**[18] He never answered this question; instead, he wrote several pages on how God "wreaks horrendous havoc on the rich."[19] In 1997, he answered his own question. This is progress. It took him only 20 years.

D. The New, Improved Version

Dr. Sider has admitted that he didn't understand much about economics in 1977. That was clear to Chilton and me when we finally got around to reading his book in 1980. In 1997, he changed his tune. In the 1997 edition, for example, he continued to call for a "graduated tithe." But he said this is strictly personal; he did not mention the state.[20] He assured us: "Certainly it is not a biblical norm to be prescribed legalistically for others."[21] Throughout the book, he called

15. Required by the United States Constitution; had he run again, he would almost certainly have been elected a third time.

16. Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. xiii.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 182–83.

18. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1977), p. 72.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 77. See Chilton, *Productive Christians*, p. 267.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 193–96.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

for private Christian charity—exactly what Chilton had called for. He made a few gratuitous genuflections toward government intervention, but mainly in the most conventional areas, such as public health matters and education[22]—activities that the typical Southern Baptist layman would agree with. Most revealing, he stripped his book of confrontational rhetoric against the free market or in favor of big government. His rare negative rhetorical flourishes were now directed against Marxism. This edition was marked by academic caution. It is an apology rather than an apologetic.

Chilton's arguments did not change Sider's mind. By the time Communism fell, making anti-capitalism passé, he had written two revisions without even mentioning Chilton or his other free market critics. Even in his third revised edition (1990), he provided not one reference to Chilton's book, and not one reference to me or this commentary series. The climate of opinion has not changed *that* much! It was not logic or the Bible that changed Sider's mind. It was the change in the climate of secular academic opinion. He was not prepared to swim upstream. Neo-evangelicals always swim downstream with the liberal current, for liberals can impose academic sanctions.

I have been swimming upstream ever since I was 14 years old, when I attended a lecture by the anti-Communist Fred Schwarz in 1956. Bit by bit, inch by inch, I have seen the intellectual tide of opinion turn—not 180 degrees, but at least 110. It reached university professors last, especially in the humanities departments. Schwarz was surprised at how just fast the tide turned after 1989.[23] He had been swimming upstream since the mid-1940s. Swimming upstream is the price of overcoming evil in an era in which evil is entrenched. It is the price of launching a paradigm shift.

Sider's earlier editions were subtitled, *A Biblical Study*. In 1997, he moved away from that sort of unacceptable positioning. He wrote: "When the choice is communism or democratic capitalism, I support democratic government and market economics." Not quite. When the choice was between Communism and market economics, he was not ready to attack Marxism, and he attacked the free market with a vengeance. It was only after the academic world was laughing at Marxists that he switched.

He went on to say, "That does not mean, however, that the Bible

22. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

23. Frederick Schwarz, M.D., *Beating the Unbeatable Foe* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1996), ch. 38.

prescribes either democracy or markets."[24] To argue, as I do and Chilton did, that decentralized constitutional democracy and the free market are exactly what the Bible prescribes, is just too theonomic for Dr. Sider.[25] In 1997, Ron Sider was closer to the biblical truth, but not on the basis of the Bible, and not on the basis of economic logic, which was as absent in his 1997 edition as it was in 1977.[26] He dismissed my defense of the free market[27] as little more than an extension of Adam Smith, whom he correctly identified as an Enlightenment thinker.[28] He refused to tell his readers about this economic commentary series or my public attack on right-wing Enlightenment political theory.[29] He did not mention theonomy's commitment to searching for judicially binding social blueprints in the Bible. He did not inform his readers that free market economics as a discipline began, not with the Enlightenment, but with the late-medieval scholastic school of Salamanca, a fact that I have tried to get people to understand ever since I published Murray Rothbard's article on the topic in 1975.[30] These scholastics used rationalism, not the Bible, to defend their case; so did the late-seventeenth-century mercantilists;[31] so did Smith; so does the entire economics profession. So what? Did Sider think that his favorite economists in 1977—there were not many cited in his footnotes—and non-economists were not also heirs of the Enlightenment? As with his academic peers, and virtually the entire Christian world, he hated theonomy, yet he implied that the Enlightenment left an unreliable legacy. To which I ask, one more time: *If not biblical law, then what*?

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24. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1997), p. 237.

25. My position on biblical law and economics is stated in chapter 52: "Biblical moral law, when obeyed, produces a capitalist economic order. Socialism is anti-biblical. Where biblical moral law is self-enforced, and biblical civil law is publicly enforced, capitalism *must* develop. One reason why so many modern Christian college professors in the social sciences are vocal in their opposition to biblical law is that they are deeply influenced by socialist economic thought. They recognize clearly that their socialist conclusions are incompatible with biblical law, so they have abandoned biblical law."

26. There is nothing on the price mechanism as a means of coordination, nothing on the division of labor, nothing on entrepreneurship as the source of profits, etc.

27. Appendix E.

28. Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. 92, note 5.

29. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989).

30. Murray N. Rothbard, "Late Medieval Origins of Free Market Economic Thought," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, II (Summer 1975), pp. 62–75; Rothbard, *Economic Thought before Adam Smith: An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought* (Brookfield, Vermont: Elgar, 1985), ch. 4.

31. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1963).

Sider affirmed what his academic peers affirm: the Bible offers no judicially binding economic, political, and social blueprints. But at least in the 1997 edition, we find no traces of his original inflammatory, anti-free market rhetoric—the outlook and rhetoric that made his book a best-seller. There is also no hint at the existence of some as yet-unpublished plan that might make statism work. He knew by 1997 that statism will not work. He could not tell us theoretically why this should be true. He showed no familiarity with Mises' 1920 article on the economic irrationality of socialist planning.[32] That article was always the most important theoretical critique of socialism, which socialist economist Robert Heilbroner finally admitted in 1990 was correct.[33]

Anti-Communism is pragmatic if it is not based on economic theory, or biblical law, or some other moral ground. Sider now rejects Communism as evil. Why did he wait so long? I contend that it was because the climate of secular liberal opinion had not yet shifted. Until secular pragmatists saw that the Communists could no longer maintain their terrorist apparatus, they rejected all economic criticisms of Communism that were based on its inherently irrationality and/or its moral evil. Until that point, the West's liberal media rejected all uncompromisingly anti-Communist authors and opinions as biased and unscholarly.[34]

How much civil government is appropriate? We just do not know, Sider said. "We need intensive study of how much and what kind of government activity promotes both political freedom and economic justice. Through painstaking analysis and careful experimentation, we must discover how much government can work within a basic market framework to empower the poor and restrain those aspects of today's markets that are destructive."[35] Notice what is the framework: free markets, not civil government.

Guilt for poverty must now be shared internationally, perhaps like foreign aid. "As we saw in chapter 7, North Americans and Europeans are not to blame for all the poverty in the world today. Sin is not just a White European phenomenon."[36]

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32. Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth" (1920), in F. A. Hayek (ed.), *Socialist Economic Planning* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, [1935] 1963), ch. 3.

33. Robert Heilbroner, "After Communism," *The New Yorker* (Sept. 10, 1990), p. 92.

34. Jean-François Revel, *The Flight from Truth: The Reign of Deceit in the Age of Information* (New York: Random House, [1988] 1991).

35. Sider, *Rich Christians* (1997), p. 236.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

What of the effects of multinational corporations? "For the purposes of this book, however, we do not have to know the answer to the question of their overall impact."[37] Some of them do damage; others do not. (This is sociology's only known law: "some do; some don't.") What of colonialism? "It would be simplistic, of course, to suggest that the impact of colonialism and subsequent economic and political relations with industrialized nations was entirely negative. Among other things, literacy rates rose and health care improved."[38] This, from the man who wrote in the second edition, "It is now generally recognized by historians that the civilizations Europe discovered were not less developed or underdeveloped in any sense" (pp. 124–25). He went on: "It would be silly, of course, to depict colonialism as the sole cause of present poverty. Wrong personal choices, misguided cultural values, disasters and inadequate technology all play a part."[39] They do, indeed—Chilton's point in 1981. Well, then, is there enough food being produced in the Third World today? Is the Third World facing famine? Here, too, we just do not know. The World Bank says there is no threat. Lester Brown—whose pessimistic assessment was prominent in the 1977 edition—says there is a threat. "The final verdict? Non-specialists like you and me cannot be sure."[40]

Here is what we *can* be sure of: this is not the *Rich Christians* that sold 350,000 copies.

Sider offered reworked versions of his old "institutionalized evil" and jubilee year chapters, but his heart just was not in it. Reading the 1997 edition of *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* is like going to your college class's 20th reunion and running into the campus radical, who is there mainly to sing the old songs. He cannot remember half of the words, but he can still hum most of the tunes. A good time will be had by all—all 350,000.

E. Who Is the Targeted Audience?

Every author should decide who his targeted audience is before he begins to write. He must also decide the time frame for this particular book's influence. Some books are tracts for the times. Others are written for the long haul. Some are aimed at large numbers of buyers. Others are aimed at opinion leaders.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

I do not expect more than a handful of people to read all 30 volumes of this commentary, yet portions of it will be still be read by some opinion-makers in 500 years. I say this in complete confidence. Why? First, because the Internet will keep it available. Second, because search engines will find videos of my summaries, and from there, viewers will find the chapters. Third, because pastors are always looking for help in dealing with problem passages, and the Pentateuch is filled with problem passages. Commentaries survive, in contrast to best- selling Christian books on contemporary issues. Recall that prior to the late 1960s, there were almost no books on contemporary Christian issues written by and for fundamentalists, and very few for academic evangelicals. This, too, was an aspect of the climate of opinion.

One idea or slogan in a book may long outlast the sale of the book, but who can successfully predict this? Not an author, surely. Not his publisher, either. Think of Malthus' formulation in his anonymous first edition of *Essay on Population* (1798): humans increase geometrically, while food supplies increase arithmetically. The idea was silly, the evidence was nonexistent, and the author dropped the phrase in subsequent editions. Nevertheless, it is the one thing most people who remember Malthus remember about him.

In contrast, another suggestion by Malthus, rarely associated with his name, was that nature produces huge numbers of offspring that perish. This idea was picked up six decades later by an unknown naturalist, Alfred Wallace, and applied to a wholly new way: some of the survivors survive because of unique biological traits, and these traits are passed on to their offspring. This insight became the basis of Wallace's formulation of the concept of evolution through natural selection. He suggested this to Charles Darwin in a letter. Darwin instantly saw that Wallace was about to beat him to the punch. Darwin had seen the same passage in Malthus and had reached the same conclusion, but he had hesitated for two decades to publish his researches. Darwin then decided that joint credit was better than no credit at all. He convinced Wallace to publish a jointly signed article in 1858. It had no influence at all. A year later, Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared. His publisher had not expected the book to sell well. His publisher was wrong. As it has turned out, Wallace received none of the credit and is long forgotten except among specialized historians. And all of this came as a result of Parson Malthus' observation about a factor in population dynamics. So it goes in the world of publishing.

How can a book survive the free market's competition?[41] There is fierce competition today in the oceans of new book titles that get printed each year. The general rule is that a book that hits the best-seller list rarely retains influence. It is too much a product of its time, i.e., tied too closely to the prevailing climate of opinion. It becomes a best-seller because it is an expression of the prevailing views of the day. Even if it is in opposition, it is within the dominant culture's acceptable boundaries of public discourse.[42] But any climate of opinion can and will change dramatically from time to time. That is why we call it a climate. The best-sellers of one era are seldom read in the next, except by historians who are trying to explain how such mediocre books could have prospered. The fable about the hare and the tortoise applies well to books whose authors hope will change people's opinions and keep them changed. This thought comforts authors whose books have not sold well.

The trick here is keeping your book(s) in print. Slow sales kill books, especially in an age in which inventory taxes place negative sanctions on marginally profitable titles. The back list that was once the bread and butter for publishers has been undermined by taxation policies. The advent of books that can be produced on demand, one copy at a time, and Internet Web sites that may some day prove profitable for downloaded books, should keep help to book titles alive until their day dawns (if ever). The bankruptcy and then collapse of the modern welfare state will also help.

Conclusion

I am writing for future generations of Christians who at long last become fed up with the results of compromises with humanism, whether right wing or left-wing. I say to them: to the law and to the testimony; trust and obey, for there's no other way; you can't beat something with nothing. I say a lot of things. Given the length of this

41. The book market is a free market. While college textbooks are subsidized indirectly by state-funded tuition, rarely does anyone change a deeply felt opinion because of something he read in a textbook. Nobody goes back to read his college textbooks, as distinguished from intelligent monographs or classics assigned in upper division classes.

42. Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* are examples of such opposition books: the first, an eloquent defense of classical education written for conservatives who have never had to trudge through that barren humanist ordeal; the second, a compilation of rewritten children's stories for grandmothers to give as Christmas presents to public school children who would be bored stiff by them if they ever bothered to read the book, which is unlikely.

book, I have said too much already. But this much I feel morally compelled say: beginning around 1960, I have learned that it is far safer to trust in the Bible than in the climate of opinion, especially tenured Christian academic opinion. Better to write and then see one's first (and last) edition appear on a remaindered book discount list than to become a best-selling author, only to publish a disguised retraction two decades later with the belated admission, "Well, it sounded good at the time."

APPENDIX G

STRONG DRINK[1]

And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD *thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.*

DEUTERONOMY 14:26–28

This text, more than any other, refutes modern fundamentalism's moral and legal prohibition against the consumption of alcohol. There is no exegetical answer to this text, so it is usually ignored by fundamentalists.

The standard fundamentalist response to biblical references to wine-drinking by righteous people is that this must have been unfermented wine. But, prior to 1869, no one had ever heard of unfermented wine. In that year, a pietistic and disgruntled communion steward, Thomas B. Welch, began producing non-alcoholic, pasteurized "wine" explicitly for use in the Lord's Supper. He called it "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine." The product caught on among Protestant pietists and then became a separate commercial product. His son re-named it Welch's Grape Juice, which was the foundation of a multi-million dollar company.[2] Grape juice as a commercial product is possible only because of pasteurization. The ancients did not possess this technology. Nevertheless, modern Protestant pietists have created an oral history which says that Jesus turned water into grape juice.

1. Written in 1997. Kenneth Gentry's book, *God Gave Us Wine: What the Bible Says About Alcohol* (Lincoln, California: Oakdown, 2001) provides a detailed analysis of the theology and exegesis of the Christian critics of wine.

2. Theodore Morrison, *Chautauqua: A Center for Education, Religion, and the Arts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 11.

When Jesus turned water into wine, the feast's organizer remarked that Jesus' wine tasted better. This was unheard of, he said; party organizers always served their best wine first. "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:10). Why did party organizers do this? Because after many hours of drinking wine, the drinkers were "feeling no pain." They did not notice or care that the later wine was of lower quality. Less expensive wine could serve the celebrational purpose. Conclusion: Jesus created wine, not grape juice. Pietism's oral history of the wedding feast of Cana makes no sense in terms of the actual text.

Jesus, in describing the growth of God's kingdom, compared it to fermenting wine. Both expand. "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles [skins]; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better" (Luke 5:37–39). First, Jesus predicted expansion. Old Covenant Israel would not be able to contain this new manifestation of the kingdom of God in history. The kingdom's Mosaic boundaries would soon be broken. This imagery was tied to the bubbling expansion of the fermentation process. No pasteurization here! Second, Jesus said that old wine tastes better to experienced drinkers. That is, the more fermented wine tastes better. Applying this imagery to the issue of the two Israels, Jesus was predicting that the defenders of Old Covenant Israel would be critical of New Covenant Israel. They would prefer the familiar taste of traditional wine.

The imagery adopted by Jesus to describe the expansion of the kingdom of God was tied to the fermentation process. But grape juice is anti-expansion. Pasteurization kills the living organisms that make fermentation possible. The Jews would prefer old wine, Jesus predicted: familiar taste, no further expansion. Modern pietists prefer grape juice. If we take Christ's imagery seriously, we can see a reason for pietism's commitment to grape juice in the Lord's Supper. *Premillennial pietism opposes the expansion of God's comprehensive kingdom in history*. It wants "souls only" evangelism, not Christendom.

A. Strong Drink and Intoxication

Pietism's mythology of unfermented wine does not escape the exegetical problem. The crucial bibulous phrase in Deuteronomy 14 is

not "wine"; it is "strong drink." The absence of strong drink had been one of God's curses on the people during their wilderness wandering, just as the absence of bread had been. Moses reminded them of this: "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God" (Deut. 29:5–6). But good times were about to replace the bad times! During the good days in Egypt, when Joseph wanted to reward his brothers before he revealed his identity to them, he gave him strong drink: "And he took and sent messes [portions] unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him" (Gen. 43:34). The word "merry" is translated from the Hebrew root word meaning to become tipsy or intoxicated, the word from which the Hebrew word for "strong drink" is derived. Strong's *Concordance* defines the word as follows: "Shekar, shay-kawr'; from Heb 7937; an intoxicant, i.e. intensely alcoholic liquor:—strong drink, + drunkard, strong wine."

The tithe of national celebration allowed families to spend money on liquor—liquor that was stronger than table wine. This was God's money, yet it was legitimately used to become slightly intoxicated, i.e., to make merry. The priestly tribe was to join in the festivities.[3] This was not grape juice. It was good, old-fashioned, buzz-producing booze, and God wanted His people to experience its pleasures. But fundamentalist pietists hate liquor so much they refuse to acknowledge the clear teaching of the Bible. Their all-consuming hatred of liquor clouds their understanding as surely as the all-consuming love of liquor clouds the understanding of alcoholics.

This obvious etymological usage has been denied by dispensational fundamentalist Robert Teachout in his Dallas Theological Seminary Th.D. dissertation, as well as in his 1983 book. He insists that *shaykar* can mean "drink deeply" rather than "become drunk." Context determines which way to translate it, he insists. The Hebrew lexicons are therefore wrong. "The idea of drunkenness so often associated with both the noun and the verb is dependent upon the context (and the beverage that is imbibed), then, and is not the innate

3. In the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, every pastor ("Levite") must take an oath of total abstinence from alcohol. They call themselves "Covenanters," after the Scottish Covenanters, yet they serve grape juice at the Lord's Supper. So do most Calvinistic Presbyterian churches. Yet the Scottish Presbyterian tradition always accepted the non-liturgical consumption of intoxicating liquor, such as Scotch.

meaning of the word, despite the simplistic rendering of Hebrew lexicons." Therefore, Deuteronomy 14:26 means "satisfying grape juice."[4]

While he is not so open as to admit what he really means—this reference is brief—here is what he means: when the Bible says not to drink strong drink (e.g., Proverbs 31:4: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink"), the word means alcohol. But when it says that strong drink may be consumed (e.g., Proverbs 31:6: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts"), it means grape juice. Fundamentalists write as though they actually believe that grape juice creates a merry heart, which indicates the degree of experience fundamentalists have with merry hearts. (Try to imagine a party where a room full of fundamentalists are working on their third punch bowl of grape juice. "Whoopee! Yippee! Halleluia!") In short, we are asked to believe that the standard Hebrew lexicons are wrong, Strong's *Concordance* is wrong, but Teachout is correct: what Deuteronomy 14:26 authorized was the consumption of a beverage that was not technologically possible to transport over long distances without fermenting. Fundamentalists ask us to believe that unfermented grape juice was common in a society that had never heard of pasteurization. My conclusion: false theological presuppositions can distort one's perception of reality as surely as excessive consumption of strong drink can.

B. Fundamentalism and Phariseeism

It is typical of modern fundamentalism that drunkenness is singled out as a sin, but gluttony is rarely mentioned. In the concordance to the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), there is no entry for "glutton." There are three for drunkenness: "drunk," "drunkard," and "drunkenness." Deuteronomy 21:20 and Proverbs 23:21 passage are both cited under "drunkard." The fundamentalist insists that any consumption of alcohol is a sin.[5] Yet he does not offer any comparable accusation against fattening foods. Modern sugar beet products, which became common only two generations prior to Dr. Welch's "unfermented wine," are never equally the target of fundamentalist moral concern, if they are mentioned at all. The bloated stomachs and posteriors of funda-

4. Robert Teachout, *Wine: The Biblical Imperative: Total Abstinence* (Columbia, South Carolina: Richbarry, 1983), p. 66.

5. Typical of this outlook are these books: William Patton, D.D., *Bible Wines: Or, the Laws of Fermentation and the Wines of the Ancients* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Star Bible Publications, 1871); Dr. Jack Van Impe, *Alcohol: The Beloved Enemy* (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson, 1980); David Wilkerson, *Sipping Saints* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1978).

mentalists are not causes for tongue-wagging; falling-down drunkenness is. Fundamentalists single out one sin and ignore the other. We are still waiting for a fundamentalist tract on the sin of gluttony. Tracts and books on the sin of liquor have been common since the 1870's. The thesis of such tracts regarding pasteurized wine was not believable prior to Dr. Welch.

The Women's Christian Temperance Movement (WCTU)—*temperance* being defined by its members as *total abstinence*—was begun in 1874 in Chautauqua, New York, not far from Dr. Welch's vineyard. It was an early feminist organization. Fundamentalists joined it in large numbers. It still exists. The *New York Times* described it in 1989 as follows: "The group's philosophy is simple: What you can't drink can't hurt you. It has an axiom, too. 'We build a fence at the top of the cliff, so you don't need an ambulance at the bottom.'"[6] This analogy of the protective fence was adopted by the Pharisees two millennia ago to describe the purpose of the oral law, which had become the Babylonian Talmud by A.D. 500. Judaism's oral law was a system of supplementary laws which placed outer boundaries—man-made interpretations—around the Mosaic law. Writes George Horowitz: "Rabbinical enactments were prohibitions called *gezerot* (decrees) and regulations of a positive character called *takkanot* (ordinances). With respect to *gezerot* one of the maxims of the Men of the Great Assembly was: 'Make a fence for the Torah' (*Avot 1,*1) i.e.: Protect the laws by a hedge of prohibitions more stringent than the letter. A warrant for this was found in Lev. 18, 30 interpreted as 'Make an injunction additional to my injunction' (*Mo'ed Katon* 5a; *sifra*, *Ahare* f. 86d, ed. Weiss; II *Dor* 247. The explicit prohibition of Deut. 4,2: 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, nor shall ye take aught from it' was easily got over by reliance upon Deut. 17, 8–11, quoted above, where implicit confidence in the courts of each generation and obedience to them are prescribed. Thus, paradoxical as it may seem the Rabbis believed that it was their right and duty to make changes in the Biblical law if imperatively required, while maintaining, nevertheless, that the commands of the Torah were unchangeable and might not be added to or diminished."[7] It was this post-exilic system of interpretation that Jesus challenged with His phrase: "You have heard it said . . . but I say unto you. . . ."[8]

6. Dirk Johnson, "Temperance Union Still Going," *New York Times* (Sept. 14, 1989).

7. Horowitz, *The Spirit of Jewish Law* (New York: Central Book Co., 1973), p. 94.

8. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 3rd ed. (Nacogdoches, Texas: Covenant Media Foundation, [1977] 2002), ch. 3.

Fundamentalist legalism is notorious. Rejecting the Mosaic law, sometimes even including the Ten Commandments,[9] the fundamentalist hastens to construct non-biblical fences and hedges around other men's Bible-authorized pastimes. Fundamentalists act as though they regard themselves as holier than God. So did the Pharisees.

Conclusion

There is no general prohibition against the use of intoxicating drinks in the Bible, except for kings (Prov. 31:4). There are no more God-anointed kings today. That office ceased with the Old Covenant. (So did the offices of priest and prophet.)

The Mosaic law authorized the consumption of wine and even stronger drink at the national festivals. Critics of alcohol logically must argue that the New Testament has imposed a more rigorous standard on God's people. What was part of the national covenant's national festival in Mosaic Israel has somehow become a sin today: the consumption of alcohol. There are no longer any mandatory national feasts. This, the critics might argue—indeed, they must argue—has not only removed God's authorization of alcohol; it has substituted a prohibition. To argue this way is to argue that the resurrected Jesus has removed a blessing from His people, a blessing that He graciously shared with others at the wedding feast at Cana. The problem is, there is no textual support for such a theological position. There is even evidence to the contrary. Paul wrote: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:23). I would add "legalism" to this list of infirmities.

This passage makes it clear that strong drink is a blessing when it is under God's authority and man's emotional control. There are legitimate times and places for the consumption of intoxicating beverages. Most important, wine in the Lord's Supper is required by God. Dr. Welch was wrong—morally and theologically—to call into question the use of wine in communion. So are his spiritual heirs.

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9. Former Dallas Seminary professor S. Lewis Johnson publicly rejected the Ten Commandments as the heart of legalism. Legalism for him meant the Ten Commandments. He approvingly quoted fundamentalist Presbyterian pastor Donald Gray Barnhouse, who argued that "It was a tragic hour when the Reformation wrote the Ten Commandments into their creeds and catechisms and sought to bring Gentile believers into bondage to Jewish law, which was never intended either for the Gentile nations or for the church." S. Lewis Johnson, "The Paralysis of Legalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (April/June 1963), p. 109.

APPENDIX H

WEAK REED: THE POLITICS OF COMPROMISE

And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD *look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.*

EXODUS 5:20–21

Politically conservative American Christians prefer affluent bondage under free market humanism rather than searching for a Bible-based alternative, for they recognize where the answer will lead: either to their belated acceptance of Christian theocracy or their belated public acceptance of the legitimacy of some other form of theocracy. Christians want to believe that they can avoid theocracy. They can't. Theocracy (*theos* = God; *kratos* = rule) is an inescapable concept. It is never a question of theocracy vs. no theocracy. It is a question of whose god rules. That which a society believes is its source of law is its operational god.[1]

Christians do not want to admit this fact of political life, either to the public or to themselves. It embarrasses them. Typical are the views of Dr. Ralph Reed, an articulate political technician who, beginning in his late twenties, built Pat Robertson's political training organization, the Christian Coalition. Robertson is the son of a United States Senator, a multimillionaire television personality, and a former ordained Baptist minister with Pentecostal leanings. He ran for the Republican Party's nomination for President of the United States in

1. T. Robert Ingram, *The World Under God's Law: Criminal Aspects of the Welfare State* (Houston, Texas: St. Thomas Press, 1962), p. 3. Cf. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1973), p. 5.

1988. Naturally, he lost.[2] He devoted the next dozen years to building up a non-partisan, grass roots political training organization, which Reed ran it for him until 1997, when he resigned to become an independent political consultant and a highly paid part-time political consultant for the now-infamous and bankrupt Enron Corporation.[3]

For Reed, politics is a profession. For the sake of partisan Republican Party politics, he walked away from considerable influence in the national media, which he enjoyed solely because he ran a non-partisan national political organization that in 1994 had over a million people in its computerized data base, which generated donations of $20 million a year[4]—in short, a major political force.

Before he decided that running individual political campaigns for a living was a far better use of his time than shaping and articulating the political agenda of millions of American evangelicals—a conclusion I wholeheartedly agree with, given his views of what constitutes legitimate political compromise—he wrote *Active Faith* (1996). It was published by the Free Press, a secular international book publisher owned by the huge Simon & Schuster publishing company. He received that book contract because at the time he possessed a great deal of national influence. A year after its publication, he possessed almost none. I bought the book in a used book store in September, 1997, for half price.

A. Clinton, Yes; Rushdoony, No

In that book, Reed specifically attacked Christian Reconstruction. He did so within the context of his defense of President Bill Clinton: "I oppose President Clinton's policies. But I do not despise him. Nor do I despise Mrs. Clinton, who has come under a blizzard of attacks in recent times. If Bill Clinton is a sinner, then he is no worse or less than you or me."[5]

In 1996, the media's reporting on Clinton's continuing sexual scandals had long since been suppressed by senior editors. The Monica

2. Vice President George Bush, Sr., won the nomination and the election.

3. Enron went bankrupt in January, 2002, which at the time was the largest bankruptcy in American history. A few months later, WorldCom's bankruptcy dwarfed it. Reed was paid $10,000 to $20,000 a month from 1997 through 2001. Robert Scheer, "A Walk Through the Valley of Greed," *Los Angeles Times* (Jan. 29, 2002).

4. Ralph Reed, *After the Revolution: How the Christian Coalition is Impacting America* (Dallas: Word, 1996), p. 200. The median price of a home was $130,000.

5. Ralph Reed, *Active Faith: How Christians Are Changing the Soul of American Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1996), p. 261.

Lewinsky scandal was two years away, a scandal that led to his impeachment by the House of Representatives, though not his conviction by the Senate. Had any pastor in the Christian Right done to a young female aide what Clinton did to Miss Lewinsky, his career would have ended, and the liberal media would have had a feast on his remains. Clinton lied to the public about the affair, admitting the truth only when her semen-stained dress revealed that it was his semen. But the dominant liberal media treated Clinton's critics as naive and politically motivated defenders of a long-dead sexual morality which has no role to play in politics. The voting public generally agreed with the media on this issue, which was indicative of the moral debauchery of the late twentieth century. The public also ignored Clinton's bombing of a harmless aspirin factory in Sudan on August 20, 1998,[6] the same day that Monica Lewinsky testified to the grand jury for the second time.

President Clinton's public sins were a great deal worse than those of Mr. Reed's targeted readership: politically conservative Christians, who were hostile to Clinton. Reed was self-consciously making a statement by his defense of Clinton. Reed's statement placed him in the camp of the loyal opposition. This is where a day-to-day political operative always has to be. He expects equal loyalty from his opponents if his candidate wins. Problem: for a Christian political leader to become a member of the loyal opposition in an era of moral crisis, when Christians have at long last begun to become politically active, is to betray the future on behalf of the present. He offers tinkering with peripheral issues at a time when shaping the future requires a principled break with the present order. Political operatives exchange influence in the future for influence in the present. They are paid to do this. Their creed is: "Business almost as usual." Dr. Reed did what he was paid to do: keep the deck chairs of the Titanic neatly arranged in a joint effort with Mr. Clinton's supporters.

Christian Reconstructionists are on the other side of this bet. Almost no one else is—surely not in the Christian community. We are on the other side because of our conviction that God will continue to extend His visible kingdom in history, which includes politics. God says of the power of every covenant-breaking social order, contrary

6. "Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, September 22, 2020; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Shifa_pharmaceutical_factory. "Lewinsky Completes Second Day of Testimony," CNN (Aug. 20, 1998), cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1998/08/20/lewinsky/ (accessed September 22, 2020).

to political operatives in every generation: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezek 21:27). This idea appalled Dr. Reed.

Dr. Reed wrote in 1996: "Some of the harshest criticisms of Clinton have come from the 'Christian nation' or Reconstructionist community, which argues that the purpose of Christian political involvement should be to legislate biblical law. Some of the more unyielding elements even advocate legislating the ancient Jewish law laid out in the Old Testament: stoning adulterers, executing homosexuals, even mandating dietary laws."[7] Unyielding elements? Unyielding to what? To President Clinton? Most of the Reconstructionist authors I know ignored both the man and his wife. We are not all that interested in politics. I have written far more in criticism of George Bush, Sr.'s New World Order rhetoric than I have written about Bill Clinton. Both Rushdoony and I publicly opposed Bush's invasion of Iraq in 1991. It is also worth noting that I do not remember seeing Mr. Reed take on Mr. Bush's New World Order rhetoric in print, although this may be because I have not spent much time reading things written by Mr. Reed. Life is too short.

I am aware of no Christian Reconstructionist who believes that the state should enforce the Mosaic dietary laws. Rushdoony personally adhered to the dietary laws, and he has written, possibly, up to a total of three whole pages on this topic, scattered among his thousands of pages of books and articles. He never called for the state to enforce them. Dr. Reed may or may not understand this. Either he misunderstood Rushdoony's position on the dietary laws, or else he was cynically misrepresenting it. In either case, he called his own would-be scholarship into question.

B. Faking It Academically

Next, he misinformed his readers about Reconstructionism's eschatology. He described it as premillennial. Here, he moved from merely misleading rhetoric to good, old fashioned ignorance of the position of those whom he criticized. He hasn't a clue that he is dealing with postmillennialists—something that, by this stage, I should imagine that everyone else who knows anything about Reconstructionism understands. "Led by R. J. Rushdoony, a theologian who serves as the intellectual fountainhead of the movement, they believe that the

7. Reed, *Active Faith*, p. 261.

primary objective of Christian activism should be to perfect society so that it is ready when Christ returns for His millennial reign."[8] On the contrary, we teach that the progressively righteous society is the millennial kingdom made visible in history. Christ reigns in history through His people, not in person. This is the traditional postmillennial argument—nothing unique here—but Dr. Reed was oblivious to it. Yet he wrote as if he were a master of Reconstruction's literature.

By now, I suppose that I should be used to this treatment. Our critics are legion. In most cases, they are not scholars. They do not know how to debate in public. They do not have the training or the inclination to engage in scholarly debate. But Ralph Reed earned a Ph.D. in history at an academically rigorous institution, Emory University, one of the most liberal universities in the United States. Had he handed in an equally unsupported critique of some liberal figure or movement to one of his liberal professors, he would have received an F. "Don't submit your right-wing fundamentalist tirades in my class, sir. This term paper is not scholarship; this is character assassination, and shoddy scholarship at that." Obviously, Dr. Reed did not do this when his liberal professors were grading him. He survived. But once out from under their control, he has reverted to form. He is a political operative with footnotes—although not enough of them. His main professional concern is neither theology nor truth; it is politics.

The basic rule of scholarship is that you must understand your opponent's position and be able to summarize it accurately before you attack it. The humanists are way ahead of most Christians in matters academic. Christians too often ignore the rules of honest criticism. This leaves them vulnerable to rebuttals such as this one. They wind up looking like dolts, with or without Ph.D.'s. While we Reconstructionists are often highly critical of other intellectual positions, no one has ever accused us of not providing the footnotes that prove that our targeted victims have written exactly what we say they have written. Dr. Reed abandoned both his humanist training and the ninth commandment here. He offered not a single footnote in his attack on Christian Reconstruction. He did not understand our position, yet he wrote authoritatively as though he had mastered it. He dismissed it without understanding it, except for its current political liabilities, which he does not mention. For sincere but uninformed Christians to follow a man who conducts himself in public in this manner would be a blot on the church. Christ deserves better.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–62.

C. "Moses Was a Tyrant"

Dr. Reed was shocked—shocked!—at Christian Reconstructionism's hostile attitude toward taxpayer-funded education. "Many reject school choice and efforts to reform public education as short-sighted and self-defeating. Instead, they call for the eventual elimination of public schools."[9] He had *that* right. Oppose the public schools? Oppose the idea that education can never be religiously neutral? Can such things be? Dr. Reed could see clearly where this is leading: to tyranny. Christian Reconstruction promotes the tyranny of parents' control over their own children's education through direct parental control over its funding. He might well have added that we also promote the same negative view of state-funded retirement programs and state-funded medicine. Dr. Reed understood exactly what this meant in the late 1990s: lost elections. And so, he wrote, "Reconstructionism is an authoritarian ideology that threatens the most basic civil liberties of a free society."[10] Yes, it does: it threatens the civil liberty to steal from other citizens by means of the ballot box, which is modern politics' most cherished principle.

Let us be quite clear about his position. Dr. Reed was arguing that the God of the Old Testament laid down as mandatory an authoritarian system of civil laws which "threatens the most basic civil liberties of a free society." He was not saying that Christian Reconstructionists have misinterpreted Old Testament law. On the contrary, he was saying that we have promoted, as he so delicately put it, "the ancient Jewish law laid out in the Old Testament." Because of our deviant judicial practice in this regard, he insisted, the pro-family movement "must unequivocally dissociate itself from Reconstructionism and other efforts to use the government to impose biblical law through political action. It must firmly and openly exclude the triumphant and authoritarian elements from the new theology of Christian political involvement."[11]

Triumphant politics. Imagine that! Christian Reconstructionists actually believe that the purpose of political action is—you won't believe this—*victory*! They believe that civil laws cannot be religiously neutral, and that—you won't believe this, either—*religious neutrality is a myth*. They believe, fantastic as it seems, that when Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with

9. *Ibid*., p. 262.
10. *Idem*.
11. *Idem*.

me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30), He was including civil law and lawyers.

Please do not imagine that I am contemptuous of Dr. Reed. That would be like being contemptuous of an unhousebroken St. Bernard puppy that has just relieved itself on the living room carpet. The puppy did not know what else to do when nature called. Nature called the puppy in the same way that natural law theory called Dr. Reed, and the results are analogous. Dr. Reed did not know any better: he had a Ph.D. from Emory University. The average carpet owner knows enough to clean up puppy's pile, but only after rubbing the puppy's nose in it, so that he will not do it again. That is what I am doing here with Dr. Reed.

Actually, Dr. Reed has done my educational work for me. He used Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition to persuade millions of American evangelicals to get involved in politics. He indirectly trained millions of them. His organization's Web site originally announced, "As executive director of the Christian Coalition in the 1990s, he built one of the most effective grassroots organizations in modern American politics. During his tenure, the organization's budget grew from $200,000 to $27 million, and its support base grew from two thousand to two million members and supporters in thousands of local chapters."[12] These troops or their spiritual heirs at some point will be ready for theologically principled action. The day will come when Dr. Reed's "loyal oppositionist" views will be abandoned as naive, deeply compromised, and no longer relevant. Christian activists will be compelled by the crisis to ask themselves: "If not biblical law, then what?" In the early 1990s, Dr. Reed softened up the evangelicals for Christian Reconstructionism, just as Dr. Ron Sider softened them up in the late 1970s.[13]

I have devoted this much space to Dr. Reed, not because his views of Christian Reconstruction ever amounted to anything important, but because his kind of "big tent" Christian political compromise cannot be sustained in a time of major crisis. Such compromise is appropriate as a temporary tactic—never as a permanent principle—only in times of Christian cultural impotence and early institution-building. But there are always Christian leaders like Dr. Reed in every era, men

12. http://www.gagop.org/AboutReed.asp. His organization's Web site is dead. The paragraph remains the Web, as of 2020: https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Ralph_E._Reed,_Jr.

13. Appendix F.

who seek to justify a temporary tactic as a desirable permanent condition. They are given access to the public arena by humanists, who control the media and who want Christians to remain contented with sitting in the back of humanism's bus, though paying full fare. This is why Dr. Reed's website proclaimed: "He is the best-selling author and editor of three books, and his columns have appeared in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal."

Reed got a lot of bad publicity in the first half of the twenty-first century. He became a highly paid consultant for Enron, the corporate fraud that became the largest bankruptcy in American history at the time of its demise in 2001.[14] Five years later, it was discovered that he had been involved in a lobbying scandal involving American Indian gambling casinos. His associate Jack Abromoff went to jail.

> On June 22, 2006 the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs released its final report on the scandal. The report states that under the guidance of the Mississippi Choctaw tribe's planner, Nell Rogers, the tribe agreed to launder money because "Ralph Reed did not want to be paid directly by a tribe with gaming interests." It also states that Reed used non-profits, including Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform, as pass-throughs to disguise the origin of the funds, and that "the structure was recommended by Jack Abramoff to accommodate Mr. Reed's political concerns."[15]

No doubt Dr. Reed still thinks that all it will take to please God in the political realm is a national Christian political campaign based on the slogan, "Back to religious neutrality: Equal time for Satan!" No more of that Old Testament stuff. God was all wrong back then. God used to be the promoter of "an authoritarian ideology that threatens the most basic civil liberties of a free society," but no longer. God has changed His mind. He has come to his senses. Dr. Reed and his political peers applaud God. God now has their full approval. This no doubt is a great comfort to God.

We have seen all this before. The religious authorities in Jerusalem were part of the loyal opposition. Jesus had been disloyal. The Establishment crucified Him for His disloyalty. He had told them plainly, "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). But it took the Jerusalem church from the stoning of Stephen until Nero's persecutions in A.D. 64 to break with the Jewish politi-

14. Robert Scheer, "A Walk Through the Valley of Greed," *The Nation* (Feb. 11, 2002).

15. "Jack Abramoff Indian lobbying scandal." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, July 23, 2011; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Abramoff_Indian_lobbying_scandal.

cal Establishment. The Christians finally left Jerusalem permanently shortly after Nero's death in A.D. 68, or so church tradition says. Then, in A.D. 70, the Jewish political Establishment fell to pagan Rome's Establishment. Rome's army destroyed Jerusalem. Never again would the church be in loyal opposition to the Jewish political Establishment. That Establishment was gone.

Conclusion

Christians are supposed to understand their times. We have limited resources. We cannot fight every battle. We must select our battles accordingly. To regard political tinkering and the working out of marginal political compromises as a legitimate substitute for prophetic confrontation at a turning point in history is a great mistake. This is the mistake of substituting the peripheral concerns of the fleeting present for the future of God's kingdom in history. I pray that you will not make this mistake.

If this be triumphalism, make the best of it.

APPENDIX I

ESCHATOLOGY, LAW, AND PIETISM

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

MATTHEW 28:18–20

A. The Great Commission

The Great Commission was comprehensive: all power, heaven and earth, all nations, all things. Nothing was left out.[1] There is no zone of neutrality in the world. Nothing is excluded from the redemptive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am aware of no Bible-affirming Christian theologian who has gone into print to argue that the Great Commission excludes any area of life. It would be difficult to make such an argument. It would be even more difficult to defend it.

The debate over Christian eschatology is ultimately a debate over whether God has decreed that the Great Commission will be fulfilled in history. Premillennialists and amillennialists deny that it can be fulfilled by today's Christian church. This is why I call these people *pessimillennialists*.[2] Most premillennialists argue that it will be fulfilled by force after Christ returns bodily to set up His earthly kingdom. But they also insist that Christians cannot fulfill the Great Commission by using the gifts that God has provided to the church during the period of Christ's bodily absence. Postmillennialists alone affirm

1. Kenneth L. Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

2. The term was coined by F. N. Lee.

that the Great Commission will become a cultural reality in a world in which Christ is absent bodily, yet ruling through His people and their covenantal institutions.[3]

If the Great Commission cannot be fulfilled, then this puts Christians in a grim position: as cultural outsiders forever looking in, as workers whose work will never come to the degree of fruition commanded by Christ, as men without the tools of dominion, as people frustrated by a God-given assignment that God Himself has decreed eschatologically cannot come to fruition. Yet the vast majority of Christians believe that the Great Commission cannot be fulfilled. The church, with only the exceptions of the Puritans, seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinists, and Scottish Calvinists, has always believed this.

Those Christians who insist that the Great Commission will never be fulfilled in history invariably have in mind *a preferred practical alternative* to an eschatologically impossible world in which the things that Christ has commanded are obeyed by the vast majority of mankind. They owe it to themselves and also to their followers to set forth plainly and in print their preferred practical alternative. They should then call their followers to support the establishment of this preferred alternative, while at the same time reminding them to work sacrificially and without compromise to proclaim and extend the Great Commission, which unfortunately can never come to fruition in history. They should forthrightly teach their followers to themselves this question: "If not 'all those things' that Christ has commanded, then what?" But they do not want to put it this way. This is because the question sounds very much like a moral compromise, a quest for second-best in a world in which Christ has commanded comprehensive obedience. It sounds too much like this question: "What other social system is a legitimate practical substitute for that which Christ has commanded?" The answer to this second question is obvious: none. They perceive this, so they do not ask this question in public. But the various answers to this privately asked question necessarily shape their thinking, which in turn shapes their social agendas—usually hidden agendas. *There is no neutrality*. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30).[4] Therefore, the question regarding a practical and ac-

3. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1997).

4. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 29.

ceptable substitute for the Christendom of the Great Commission cannot be legitimately evaded. Neither can an answer.

There has been a continuing search by Christians for a long-term cultural compromise. Christian theologians implicitly and sometimes explicitly ask themselves the following questions: (1) If Christianity cannot be triumphant in history, then what should Christians settle for as being second-best to what God has commanded? (2) Which anti-Christian culture, law-order, and worldview can and should Christians learn to live with in their lifelong quest for survival in a world at war with the God of the Bible?

These are ultimately eschatologically driven questions. They are this question: "Is there some way, other than cultural victory for Christ's gospel, in which the following passage can be avoided in my lifetime?"

> And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake (Matt. 24:6–9).

The eschatological preterist argues that the fulfillment of this prophecy took place at the fall of Jerusalem to Rome in A.D. 70.[5] He does not believe that this prophecy is hanging over the church. But non-preterist amillennialists worry about it, which means most amillennialists. So do post-tribulation premillennialists. Pre-tribulation premillennialists (dispensationalists) find solace only in their belief that Christ will rapture the church out of history before this horrendous event takes place. But dispensationalism's rapture fever[6] produces a view of the church's role in history that is always one of culturally defensive compromise with the prevailing anti-Christian civilization. As dispensationalist theologian Thomas D. Ice has put it, "Premillennialists have always been involved in the present world. And, basically, they have picked up on the ethical positions of their contemporaries."[7]

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5. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987).

6. Gary North, *Rapture Fever: Why Dispensationalism Is Paralyzed* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1993).

7. April 12, 1988; cited by Gary DeMar, *The Debate Over Christian Reconstruction*, p. 185. (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1988).

Theology is a package deal. The Christian who asks the rhetorical question, "Is eschatology so important that it must divide Christians?" has no understanding of the integrated nature of theology.

B. Theology and Eschatology

The most important theological issue is *theology proper*: the doctrine of God. He who gets this doctrine wrong will suffer eternal negative sanctions. The early church fought long and hard to establish orthodoxy in this area of theology. It is here, and only here, that the church has come to an agreement: Trinitarianism. Regarding the other four covenantal issues—hierarchy, law, sacraments, and eschatology—there has been constant disagreement.

Eschatology is the fifth point of Christian theology: (1) God, (2) man, (3) law, (4) sanctions, (5) eschatology.[8] It is also chronologically the fifth great theological debate in the history of the Western church. The first was theology proper. This debate was settled in the fourth century.[9] The solution was the doctrine of the Trinity. None of the rest of the five debates has been settled. The second debate was over hierarchy: church vs. church (the East-West split came in 1054) and church vs. state (the conflict between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV in 1076). The third debate was over law. This debate began in the Western church in the eleventh century: canon law vs. a revived secular Roman law.[10] Scholasticism soon appeared: the philosophical attempt to reconcile these two legal and philosophical systems. The attempt failed. The Reformation was fought mainly over point four: sanctions. The Reformation was a culture-transforming and culture- splitting public debate over the role of Papal indulgences (the issue of the sanction of purgatory), the number and meaning of the sacraments (realism vs. nominalism),[11] the judicially binding character of vows of celibacy made by the clergy and nuns, and the judicially binding character of excommunication by the Roman Church. Finally, in the late 1800s, eschatology became the fifth

8. On the five points of covenant theology, see Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant*, 2nd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1987] 1992).

9. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* (Vallecito, California: Ross House, [1968] 1998), chaps. 2, 3.

10. Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983).

11. Covenantalism is implied by Calvin's rejection of Roman Catholicism's realism (real presence) and also Anabaptism's nominalism (remembrance). But his invocation of "mystery" did not solve the problem.

major divisive issue in Protestantism. This debate began in earnest with the success in the United States of *Jesus Is Coming* (1878), written by W.E.B.,[12] and the advent of prophecy conferences.

Christian theology is theocentric. *Theology proper* is the foundation of the other four doctrines. Get theology proper wrong, and you will get the other four wrong by identifying the wrong god as sovereign. This is why the Book of Genesis is the most important book in the Pentateuch. Genesis describes the origin of the universe and presents the Creator-creature distinction. The debate over origins has been the fundamental debate between Christianity and paganism from the beginning. Evolutionism has been around a long time. So has the doctrine of the eternality of matter.[13] In our day, the evolution-creation debate has dwarfed all others as the chief theological battlefield of the church. More intellectual ground has been surrendered faster by Christianity since the advent of Darwinism than ever before in the history of the church. Even Islam's invasion of the West and its complete conquest of North Africa, 622–711, was a minor affair compared to the surrender of the modern church to a peculiar hybrid of Darwinism and theism: *theistic evolution*. Darwinists regard theistic evolution as ludicrous, but the idea gives psychological comfort to Christians who have adopted an evolutionary time scale. The church has preferred to baptize evolutionism rather than resist it.

The debate over eschatology has become a major dividing line within the Protestant church ever since the 1870s, about the time of Darwinism's extension into all academic fields. The comprehensive and rapid triumph of Darwinism in both the academic world and the political world has been parallelled by the triumph of dispensationalism in the Arminian, pietistic Protestant world.[14] Darwinism has conquered the thinking of humanists. At the same time, dispensationalism has provided fundamentalist Christians with both a theological explanation and a justification for their surrender of cultural territory to the Darwinists. That which Christianity has surrendered to the humanists has been identified by pietists in general and dispensationalists in particular as either beyond the redemptive power of the gospel during this dispensation or else inherently part of Satan's kingdom. The typical American fundamentalist's pre-1976 assessment, "politics is dirty," is more of a description of politics in general than politics

12. William E. Blackstone.
13. Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII.
14. The one major exception: the Church of Christ (Campbellite).

merely in this temporary dispensation. The same negative assessment applies to culture in general. We are confidently assured: "There is no such thing as Christian [politics, economics, psychology, etc.]" This is accompanied by a corollary: "The Bible isn't a blueprint for [politics, economics, psychology, etc.]." Judicially, "we're under grace, not law." Above all: "You don't polish brass on a sinking ship."[15] This statement of faith is eschatological.

Nevertheless, we are also assured of the opposite. "The Bible has answers for every question." "There is no neutrality." "Jesus calls men to surrender to Him totally." "The redemptive power of the gospel heals all sin." That these assertions are in complete opposition to the previous ones is not recognized by most fundamentalists.

Eschatology is part of the covenant: point five. The church can get the last four points incorrect and still persevere in history, but it cannot inherit in history until it gets correct all five points and their applications. The progressive cultural disinheritance of the church, which has accelerated since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), began long before Darwin. It began no later than 1700: the rise of the Newtonian Enlightenment.[16] But modern evolutionism offers the most coherent theological system in the history of the war between belief and unbelief: from its doctrine of impersonal creation (the Big Bang) to its doctrine of the impersonal last judgment (the heat death of the universe).[17]

Rival theologies have always confronted Christianity. These rival theologies have always occupied territory within the church and its allied academic agencies. So have rival eschatologies. Communism surely offered a rival eschatology.[18] Today, as in 622, so does Islam.

C. Pessimillennialism vs. Deliverance in History

Amillennialism and premillennialism deny that Christianity can create a culture in history. Amillennialists say this can never happen. Premillennialists say it will not happen until Jesus appears with His angels to set up an international Christian bureaucracy.

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15. This phrase was popularized in the 1950s by radio preacher J. Vernon McGee.

16. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), pp. 334–55.

17. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), ch. 2.

18. F. N. Lee, *Communist Eschatology* (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig, 1974).

1. Amillennialism

To relegate formal eschatology to the final judgment and the post-resurrection world, which amillennialism does, is a fundamental error that has culturally debilitating consequences. It means surrendering civilization to covenant-breakers as a consequence of eschatological, prophetic inevitability. No one has put it more clearly than amillennialist theologian David Engelsma. He is the senior theologian of the tiny Protestant Reformed Church, which split from the Christian Reformed Church in 1923 over the issue of common grace, which the PRC says does not exist.[19] As you read this diatribe, think "carnal = fallen men; spiritual = persecuted Christians." Engelsma writes:

> Carnal dominion is earthly victory. It is victory according to the thinking of man. It consists of numbers—the conversion of a majority of humans; of physical force—a Christian police force and army; of control of culture—godly television, radio, and newspapers; of deliverance from worldly cares and natural miseries—the virtual eradication of poverty, sickness, and war; and of material prosperity—jobs, money, houses, and long life.
>
> This is the dominion of Christ that is proclaimed by postmillennialism, especially by Christian Reconstruction. This is supposed to be the victory of Christ in history, the flourishing of the Messianic kingdom.
>
> It is a carnal dominion.
>
> The victory heralded by Reformed amillennialism is spiritual. It is real victory. It is real victory here and now. But it is victory according to the thinking of God. It is contrary to human standards of victory, including that of Christian Reconstructionism, foolishness. No one can see this victory, just as no eye can see the kingdom that is established by this victory. The victory and kingdom of Christ can be known only by faith.
>
> The true victory of Christ in history is His saving of the elect church from sin. It is His empowering that church to confess His name. It is His preservation of the church in holiness unto life eternal. To this saving of the church belongs Christ's institution of true churches that preach the gospel purely, administer the sacraments properly, and exercise Christian discipline rightly.[20]

To put it as bluntly and as graphically as I can, amillennialism's archetypal victory in a progressively sinful civilization is the victory of a handful of Christians who are locked in their cells at night in a concentration camp, and who are worked like slaves during their

19. Gary North, *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis of Progress* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), ch. 1.

20. David J. Engelsma, *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom: A Defense of Reformed Amillennialism* (Redlands, California: Reformed Witness, 2001), p. 123.

waking hours. God's victory is demonstrated by never allowing all of the concentration camps to snuff out weekly worship services. God shows Christians victorious grace by persuading the camp's warden to let them meet once a week in the camp's latrine area, and to take the Lord's Supper once a month.

For the amillennialist, victory in history is manifested best by the existence of the **Barbed Wire Reformed Church**. For the amillennialist, the enduring authoritative example of God's victory in history is Israel in Egypt, after the Pharaoh of the persecution but before Moses arrived to put the nation into conflict with the Pharaoh of the exodus. None of that deliverance stuff! All talk of deliverance only gets good people into trouble with the lawful authorities. Such talk is carnal. This was the message of the shackled rulers of Israel to Moses and Aaron.

> And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us (Ex. 5:20–21).

If you doubt me, consider Engelsma's warning. "To mock this spiritual victory of Christ is unbelief. To be dissatisfied with it is ingratitude."[21] Like the elders of Israel in Egypt, Engelsma calls to account anyone who dared to call attention to the obvious fact that slavery is not liberty and servitude is not victory.

Engelsma was a consistent amillennialist. He was also a consistent pietist. The pietist adamantly rejects any suggestion of the legitimacy and desirability of Christianity's cultural dominance in history. This is a form of neoplatonism. The pessimillennialist adds to this a sigh of relief: God has predestined this lack of influence. Failure is guaranteed eschatologically. The less cultural influence, the better spiritually, says the pietist.

Engelsma was forthright: earthly success, he defines as carnal, i.e., either evil or at least spiritually immature. But there is an exegetical dilemma facing Engelsma, one which he conveniently ignores. Paul uses "carnal" pejoratively with respect to sin. He uses "spiritual" positively with respect to God's law. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). Moses taught explicitly that corporate obedience to Bible-revealed law guarantees the

21. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

external dominion in history by God's covenant people. It is not the law and its promises regarding history that are carnal, Paul taught; rather, it is the sinful condition of men who do not obey God's law. Engelsma tried his rhetorical best to tar and feather biblical law and its cultural promises with Paul's language of carnality. But Paul argued the other way: *the spirituality of God's law*. Such is the fate of amillennialists who are also pietists. They do not think covenantally.

Engelsma's theology bordered on neoplatonism, as all pietism does: *a contemptuous dismissal of matter as manifested in culture*. Rushdoony defined neoplatonism as follows:

> For Greek thought, two substances existed; on the one hand are ideas, mind, or spirit, the world of forms, and on the other hand is the world of matter, of particulars against universals, of the many as against the one. Since each was an independent substance, there was no effective and necessary link between the world of mind and the world of matter, and, as a result, the two tended to fall apart as philosophy pursued the logic of each starting point.
>
> Neoplatonism developed in Alexandria and spread throughout the ancient world. Basic to neoplatonism was the emphasis on mind or ideas as the true or more important substance, so that the superior man, discerning the irrelevance and/or illusory nature of the material world, concentrated on the things of the mind or spirit.[22]

The pietist dismisses as material both cultural creativity and cultural dominion, for both are confined to history, which is ultimately irrelevant except as the brief period of time available for each person's regeneration. The ideal of cultural dominion is said to be carnal. The Christian neoplatonist dismisses any claim that Christianity can or should create its own defining culture, even though he readily admits that every other religion creates its own defining culture. Therefore, he views the war between Christianity and all rival religions as a war in which Christians will at best be allowed by God to live in one or another pagan culture. God supposedly has predestined this outcome. Christianity will not transform culture. It will barely be able to preserve a defensive ghetto culture in the Gulag. The culture war is therefore not worth fighting. "Pull up the drawbridge!"

The main differences between amillennialism and postmillennialism center around the degree to which history will visibly manifest the judicial inheritance which Jesus Christ obtained through His

22. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity* (Vallecito, California: Chalcedon, [1973] 2008), p. 6.

death and resurrection, and which He announced to His disciples in Matthew 28:18. Will His legal title to all things, which was granted to Him by God the Father after the resurrection, progressively manifest itself culturally in the work of Christians in building up the kingdom of God on earth and in history?

Because of confusion on this point, let me clarify: the New Covenant kingdom of God was established *definitively* in history by Jesus prior to His death and resurrection. "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. 12:28). Title to the earth was transferred to Him by God after the resurrection. Jesus transferred title to the church, His bride, no later than Pentecost (Acts 2). Thus, the New Covenant kingdom of God began before title was transferred. The church lawfully invokes its legal title, but this title is reclaimed from Satan *progressively*, through Christian reconstruction, i.e., working out our faith with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), in every area of life—matching Christ's transferred title to everything—through service to others: "But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42–45). The dominion covenant is progressively achieved by Christians in history on a culture-wide basis by means of the church's division of labor (Rom. 12; I Cor. 12), which I have discussed in my commentaries on these two Pauline epistles: *Cooperation and Dominion* and *Judgment and Dominion*.

The postmillennialist argues as follows: *that which was judicially definitive in history at the resurrection will be extended progressively in history to the entire culture*. This process is analogous to Jesus' sin-free final and perfect sanctification, which is judicially transferred to believers definitively at the time of their redemption,[23] but which

23. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:5–7). See John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1955).

they must work out in history.[24] God gave Abraham legal title to the Promised Land, but actual possession had to wait four generations (Gen. 15:16).[25] What Abraham received definitively by promise was achieved by his circumcised heirs, although they subsequently surrendered geographically for a time (the exile) and then covenantally in Christ's day (Matt. 21:43). Eschatologically, Old Covenant Israel moved steadily toward apostasy and defeat in history, beginning with the incomplete conquest of Canaan.

The amillennialist argues the opposite: *that which was judicially definitive in history at the resurrection will not be extended progressively in history to the entire culture*. Not only is there is no positive correlation between (1) Christ's definitive title to ownership of the world and (2) the church's extension of the kingdom of God in history to culture, there is a negative correlation. Satan's theft of culture through Adam will never be overcome in history. That which was definitive in Christ's resurrection from the dead and His lawful reclaiming of the inheritance will never have a widespread effect in history. There must be a growing historical gap between Christ's definitive inheritance of the earth at the resurrection and His final inheritance of the earth at the final judgment. In between, Satan and his disciples retain control and even increase their control.

Is the church also moving progressively toward final defeat, though not complete apostasy? I ask: Why should the church be defeated in history? I know why Israel was defeated. *Israel was defeated because Israel apostatized completely*. No conservative Trinitarian theologian argues that the entire church will apostatize completely, yet most Christian theologians believe that the church will be defeated culturally. The cultural history of the church will supposedly be found on that last day to have recapitulated the cultural history of Old Covenant Israel. So teach amillennialism and premillennialism.

2. Premillennialism

There is another variation of the same pietistic error: dispensational premillennialism. This view of eschatology consigns the fulfillment of Old Testament's prophecies of universal victory for the kingdom of God to the post-Church Age era. Only after Christ bodily

24. Gary North, *Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 9.

25. Gary North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), ch. 23.

returns victoriously, along with his angels (and, in some popular versions, with resurrected saints),[26] which dispensationalism asserts, will it be possible to establish Christian culture. Premillennialists refuse to describe this future culture.

Dispensationalism is as pietistic and therefore as neoplatonic as amillennialism is. It has equally culturally debilitating consequences. Dispensationalism teaches explicitly that no Old Testament prophecy has been literally fulfilled or can be literally fulfilled by the Church in this, the so-called Church Age (the "Great Parenthesis").[27] For now, the church must resign itself to minority status and cultural impotence. Dispensational author David Allen Lewis offered this reason for rejecting Christian Reconstruction: such views will upset the humanists, who will inevitably become more powerful. "...as the secular, humanistic, demonically-dominated world system becomes more and more aware that the Dominionists and Reconstructionists are a real political threat, they will sponsor more and more concerted efforts to destroy the Evangelical church. Unnecessary persecution could be stirred up."[28] This was the response of the Hebrew elders to Moses and Aaron (Ex. 5:2). Those Christians who live in fear of the Egyptians of this world proclaim cultural impotence as a way of life.

My assessment of dispensationalism as equally neoplatonic as amillennialism also applies to generic premillennialism's insistence on the church's inevitably declining cultural influence in the pre-millennial era, in which the church supposedly must experience prior to Christ's eschatologically discontinuous return with His angels to establish His new headquarters on earth, rather than remain seated at the right hand of God in heaven. The church will fall into persecution in history unless it is raptured out of history.[29]

Then how is the New Covenant church any better protected from evil than the Old Covenant church was? Israel fell away repeatedly. How is it that the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ leaves His church no better equipped for victory?

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26. Thomas D. Ice, "Preface," final paragraph, in H. Wayne House and Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 1988). For a brief critique, see North, *Rapture Fever*, p. 136.

27. "If the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the promises of the future made to Abraham and David are to be literally fulfilled, then there must be a future period, the millennium, in which they can be fulfilled, for the Church is not now fulfilling them in any literal sense." Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 158. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), p. 147.

28. Lewis, *Prophecy 2000* (Green Forest, Arkansas: New Leaf Press, 1990), p. 277.

29. North, *Rapture Fever*.

D. Christ's Ascension and Social Theory

This raises a very embarrassing question: Is the *post*-ascension church always in the same eschatological condition as *pre*-ascension Israel?

1. Amillennial Social Theory

The amillennialist seeks to evade this question, but when pressed, his answer is *yes*. He believes, but refuses to say in public, that the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ in history and the sending of the Holy Spirit in history are insufficient to empower the church in history to break out of its sad pathway to visible cultural defeat. Amillennialists have an implicit but unstated conclusion with regard to the doctrine of the bodily ascension of Christ: *the cultural power of sin is greater in history than the cultural power of redemption*. They relegate the prophesied victory of the church in history to the realm of personal victory over sin, while affirming the church's inevitable visible defeat. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ took place in history, but for all the good it does the church culturally, it might as well never have happened. The ascension's impact is internal and individual, not external and cultural, insists the amillennialist.

Theological liberals have been far more consistent in their view of the resurrection and ascension: they have relegated both historical events to the realm of the spirit. To them, the bodily ascension of Christ is a phrase testifying to the spiritual optimism of the early church, not a visible, verifiable historical event. Amillennialists believe the same thing regarding the promised victory of the church in history. When the Bible repeatedly predicts that covenant-keepers will inherit the earth in history, the amillennialist says, "Spiritual, not literal!"

Postmillennialists believe that Christ's bodily ascension to heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost empowered the church in history to recapture lost territory in every realm of life. Amillennialists believe that such reconquest cannot take place in history; the church will surrender territory, should it ever actually recapture it. The church's cultural inheritance supposedly will go the way of the Mosaic land inheritance. Christ's ascension plays no role in amillennial social theory. Here is what I wrote in the conclusion of chapter 6 in *Leviticus*.

> There is remarkably little discussion of the ascension of Christ in modern orthodox theology.[30] This topic inevitably raises fundamental historical,

30. Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), pp. 227–29.

> cosmological, and cultural implications that modern premillennial and especially amillennial theologians find difficult to accept, such as the progressive manifestation of Christ's rule in history through His representatives: Christians.[31] In a world in which grace is believed to be progressively devoured by nature, there is little room for historical applications of the doctrine of the historical ascension. Covenantal postmillennialism alone can confidently discuss the doctrine of Christ's ascension, for postmillennialism does not seek to confine the effects of Christ's ascension to the realms of the internal and the trans-historical.[32] That is to say, postmillennialism does not assert the existence of supposedly inevitable boundaries around the effects of grace in history. On the contrary, it asserts that all such boundaries will be progressively overcome in history, until on judgment day the very gates (boundaries) of hell will not be able to stand against the church (Matt. 16:18).[33]

Both amillennialism and premillennialism teach the inevitable disinheritance of the church in history and the illegitimacy of the ideal of Christendom as applying to civilization prior to the bodily return of Christ. Eschatology shapes social theory.

2. Covenantal Social Theory

Covenantal representation—point two of the biblical covenant—is not merely contemporary; it is also historical and eschatological. For all mankind, it is historical representation in the past: Adam's Fall. For Old Covenant Israel, it was also eschatological representation in the future: Christ's bodily resurrection and bodily ascension to the right hand of God. New Covenant eschatological representation is based on the fact that there will inevitably be a cultural victory for the church in history because of Christ's bodily death, resurrection, and ascension, all of which were historical events. Christ's judicially rep-

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31. No theological or eschatological school denies that there can be prolonged setbacks in this manifestation of Christ's rule. Conversely, none would totally deny progress. I know of no one who would argue, for example, that the creeds of the church prior to the fourth century were more rigorous or more accurate theologically than those which came later.

32. This is why amillennialism drifts so easily into Barthianism: the history of mankind for the amillennialist has no visible connection with the ascension of Jesus Christ. Progressive sanctification in this view is limited to the personal and ecclesiastical; it is never cultural or civic. The ascension of Christ has no transforming implications for society in amillennial theology. The ascension was both historical and publicly visible; its implications supposedly are not. The Barthian is simply more consistent than the amillennialist: he denies the historicity of both Jesus' ascension and His subsequent grace to society. Christ's ascension, like His grace, is relegated to the trans-historical. See North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, pp. 111–13.

33. Gentry, *He Shall Have Dominion*, chaps. 12, 13.

resentative victory *in history* is the covenantal foundation of the kingdom's triumph *in history*. Paul was adamant on this point: Christ's resurrection from the dead is the church's guarantee of victory in history.

> But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. **For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet**. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:20–28).[34]

Christ's bodily resurrection was the visible evidence of God's transfer of earthly power to Christ in history. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18–20). Next, His bodily ascension was the visible evidence of His transfer of judicial authority to the church. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:8–9). The angels told the witnesses not to stand around gazing into heaven. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The historicity of Christ's bodily ascension makes this event crucial for biblical social theory. Neither premillennialism nor amillennialism has a developed theology of the ascension. The amillennial system implicitly denies the relevance of this doctrine for social theory.[35] The

34. Gary North, *Judgment and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2001] 2012), ch. 16.

35. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, pp. 227–35.

premillennial system in practice concentrates on standing around and gazing upward in expectation of Christ's imminent return.[36] Both viewpoints reject the possibility of developing an explicitly biblical social theory—i.e., a social theory without any compromise with natural law—because both viewpoints ignore the implications of Christ's ascension for church history. Neither system acknowledges the five-point aspect of Christ's covenantal incarnation in history: (1) transcendence/immanence (both God and perfect man in one person with two natures); (2) hierarchy/representation (the divine office of Son in the economical Trinity and the human office of second Adam); (3) ethics/law (Christ's perfect fulfillment of the law); (4) oath/sanctions (death and bodily resurrection); (5) succession/inheritance (bodily ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit). Pessimillennial systems have substituted a doctrine of Satanic inheritance in church history for the doctrine of Christendom. This is a reversal of what Jesus taught: the meek will inherit the earth.

Covenant-keeping men's confidence in God's transforming work in history wanes when they no longer see evidence of God's predictable sanctions in history, an historical and psychological fact to which twentieth-century Christianity testified eloquently. This loss of perception is not a valid excuse for abandoning hope regarding the future, for God's word testifies to the victory of God's visible kingdom in history.[37] Nevertheless, Christians lose confidence easily, including theologians; they cannot live indefinitely with contradictions between what they say they believe and what they see—"cognitive dissonance," as scholars call it. Theologians have re-written kingdom eschatology because they could no longer persuade themselves that what they and their peers see all around them testified to the predictability of God's corporate sanctions as described in the Old Testament. Premillennialism is an eschatology of predictable sanctions—both personal and corporate—that must be deferred until Jesus returns to earth in total power to impose them in person. Amillennialism is an eschatology of predictable, long-run, negative historical sanctions against God's people and His kingdom. So is premillennialism until such time as Christ returns in person to impose sanctions through a gigantic, international, top-down bureaucracy staffed by Christians.[38] But pre-

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 256–57.

37. Roderick Campbell, *Israel and the New Covenant* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1954).

38. North, *Millennialism and Social Theory*, ch. 4.

dictable, corporate, historical sanctions are an inescapable concept. It is never a question of "predictable, corporate, historical sanctions vs. no predictable, corporate, historical sanctions"; it is always a question of *what kind* of predictable, corporate, historical sanctions.[39] It is ultimately a question of *whose law-order* governs the imposition of such historical sanctions. It is a debate over who rules in history, Christ or antiChrist.

Almost from the beginning, the church substituted rival eschatologies that were based on an ethically perverse system of predictable, corporate, historical sanctions during the church age. These pessimillennial eschatologies teach that God will impose negative sanctions in history against covenant-keepers, and positive sanctions for covenant-breakers.[40] This is consistent with the church's opposition to biblical law and especially its sanctions.

Christian theologians have publicly rejected God's revealed law and its mandated civil sanctions, and they have also rejected the biblical doctrine of predictable historical blessings for men's corporate obedience and cursings for their disobedience. They have substituted other laws—"natural" laws—and other systems of predictable corporate sanctions, such as those imposed by a supposedly ethically neutral and culturally autonomous free market or those drawn up by a committee of central planners. In short, they have abandoned biblical law, biblical sanctions, and biblical eschatology. They have vaguely understood that these three covenantal doctrines are a coherent, unbreakable unit—points three, four, and five of the biblical covenant model—and so they have consistently abandoned all three.[41]

3. Pietism's Social Theory

A representative example of pietism is Peter Toon's book, *The Ascension of Our Lord* (1984). The book was originally a series of lectures at Dallas Theological Seminary, the world's leading dispensational seminary. Books on the ascension are rare, so this one affords us an opportunity to see how the doctrine is understood in the evangelical Protestant community.

There is nothing in this book on the relationship between Christ's ascension and the extension of the kingdom of God as biblical civi-

39. *Ibid.*, chaps. 7, 8.

40. *Ibid.*, chaps. 5, 11.

41. A good example is Cornelius Van Til. For a detailed analysis of Van Til's views on points three through five, see North, *Political Polytheism*, ch. 3.

lization. There are chapters on Jesus the King, Jesus the Priest, and Jesus the Prophet. We might expect something on social theory in the chapter on Jesus the king. What we get is pure pietism: Jesus the suffering servant. Jesus does not reign so much as He suffers. This is because Jesus and His body, the church, are separated in history. They will remain separated until the end of the age.[42]

Not only is Christ separated from His body, the church, and therefore must remain unfulfilled until the end of the age, says Toon, Christ actually suffers. His ascension has not overcome His suffering. Toon wrote:

> Furthermore, there is a sense in which Christ, in relation to his body, is imperfect. Paul told the Colossian church: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church" (1:24). There were no deficiencies in the personal sufferings of Jesus Christ and there was no lack of worth in his sufferings. However, in and through his body, Christ still suffers, must suffer, and will suffer before the consummation of the work of God in this body (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9). Yet, as he suffers in and through his body, he also brings succor to those who are suffering; we have a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and tribulations (Heb. 4:15).[43]

To call this argument bizarre is saying too little. Hebrews 4:15 teaches that Jesus suffered in history. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Jesus suffered definitively in history, as Toon said. He suffered all there was to suffer in principle. But this does not deny the progressive suffering in history by His covenantal representatives. Jesus was also definitively perfect in history. This does not deny that His people work out Christ's judicially imputed moral perfection in history. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). This is progressive sanctification. Colossians 3 deals with progressive suffering. *Neither passage has anything to do with Christ's supposedly shared condition in heaven*.

How could Toon make such a blatant theological error, i.e., the idea of Christ's suffering in heaven along with His earthly church? Because his presentation in this book is completely colored by his pi-

42. Peter Toon, *The Ascension of Our Lord* (Nashville: Nelson, 1984), p. 45.
43. *Ibid*., p. 46.

etism. Rather than discuss the Holy Spirit's empowering of Christians for kingdom-extending service, he called attention to the succoring of Christians by Christ. Christ's kingship is not manifested by Christianity's visible dominion in history, but rather by Christ's invisible succoring of besieged Christians in history. There is not one word in the book on either cultural dominion or the kingdom of God manifested in institutions other than the church. There is nothing on empowerment for cultural rule. Rather than empowering His covenant people to rule in His name, the ascended Christ is content to succor them in their permanent historical defeat. This is pure, 24-karat pietism. And, like 24-karat gold, it bends and can be flattened.

Toon cited the Westminster Larger Catechism (1647). He cited it selectively: Answer 45. He ignored Answer 54:

> Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

Note that this passage refers to history, i.e., the church militant: "furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them." Christ's subduing of His enemies therefore has to take place in history, not only at the last judgment. Note also that there is no mention of suffering. On the contrary, the text proclaims "all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth."

Toon ignored this passage for good reason. He was engaged in a reinterpretation of the Larger Catechism to make it conform with pessimillennial pietism. This is not an easy task, for the document was produced by theocrats, many of whom were postmillennial, as Answer 191 indicates. Toon confined his discussion to the institutional church. He also confined his discussion to the psychology of individual Christians. He relegated all victory to the end of the world. Here is how he interprets Answer 45. (The italicized sentences are from the Larger Catechism. My responses are inside parentheses.) *He calls out a people to himself*. This means that Christ sends evangelists.[44] (So far, so good.) *He gives them officers, laws, and censures*. This refers exclusively to the institutional church.[45] (No problem yet.) *He bestows saving grace*

44. *Idem*.
45. *Ibid*., p. 47.

on the elect. This refers exclusively to the institutional church.[46] *He rewards their obedience*. "This reward will be given in heaven, but its exact nature is not disclosed in the New Testament."[47] *He corrects them for their sins*.[48] (No problem here.) *He preserves and supports them under all circumstances*. (Big problem here. Does this mean that He brings them external victory in history? No, said Toon. This support is strictly psychological.) "Yet Christ the King orders their circumstances and inwardly helps them by his Spirit so that they are able to stand firm in faith and joyfully confess his name in word and deed."[49] *Christ restrains and overcomes all our enemies*. (But when? Only at the final judgment, said Toon.) "Before his return to earth, Jesus the Lord and King restrains the evil power of Satan and his hosts, so that what they can achieve is limited. When he appears in glory to judge the living and the dead he will overcome all his enemies and they will be judged and punished."[50]

Toon's pietism colored everything in the book. He said that Satan and his host possess limited authority. There is nothing unique about this observation. Every Christian admits this. But he neglected to say explicitly what this admission means for a pietist. The pietist affirms that Satan presently rules the affairs of this world: culture, politics, education, etc. But, at the final judgment, Christ will overcome Satan by His divine, bodily intervention. This overcoming is supposedly not representative for Christ through His church in history. This overcoming is also not a process; rather, it comes only at the end of the process, i.e., at the end of history. In stark contrast to his view of Christ's non-dominion in history, the pietist believes that cultural dominion is judicially representative for Satan. Satan rules history through his covenant people. He does not rule from a throne in some earthly location. The pietist insists that neither Satan nor his host will be overcome by Christ's representatives in church history. Therefore, the pietist insists, what works for Satan until the end of time—*representative dominion through covenantal agents*—cannot work for Christ. Anyway, he would insist this if he had ever thought about this aspect of his theology, which he hasn't. But what did Jesus say about the church? This: the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

46. *Idem*.
47. *Ibid*., p, 48.
48. *Idem*.
49. *Idem*.
50. *Ibid*., p. 49.

Toon did not refer to the future millennial kingdom, when Jesus supposedly will rule on earth in person. I have never read any premillennialist author who attempts to relate the theology of ascension, meaning Christ's cosmic rulership from on high, with the Great Commission's call for comprehensive redemption.[51] We hear nothing about His rulership on earth and in history through His covenantal representatives. Yet pietism's theologians are quite willing to affirm that Satan's representatives in history do rule in his name, despite his physical absence. *These theologians refuse to consider this same representative arrangement with respect to Christians*. They openly affirm that Satan's representatives have achieved cultural dominion in history, despite their lord's physical absence, yet they categorically reject Christian cultural dominion as being impossible for Spirit-empowered Christians in the post-ascension era.

Then what has Christ's bodily ascension accomplished for the kingdom of God in history, according to pietists? Not dominion, surely. Not a comprehensive civilization. Not even a comprehensive theory of civilization. The pietist rejects the Middle Ages, when Christianity was culturally influential, as "triumphalism," theocratic, and tyrannical. He is happy that the church makes no such claims today. Better to live under the rule of covenant-breakers. Better to suffer.

In an appendix, Toon wrote: "Third, the Ascension means that he is, and will be, the conqueror and judge of the enemies of God."[52] This view of Christ's conquest incorporates two of the three traditional explanations of Christ's work of redemption ("buying back"): *definitive* and *final*. But something is missing: *progressive*. This is always missing in amillennialism, and it is always missing in premillennialism's view of the pre-millennial era of the church. Neither eschatological system has a doctrine of church history that relates Christ's definitive and final sanctification. That is, *there is no temporal connection between definitive sanctification and final sanctification*. There is also no corporate sanctification. Yet for the bride of Christ to be presented pure and undefiled to the Bridegroom at the end of history, there has to be progressive corporate sanctification in history. Amillennialists and premillennialists reject such a notion. So do pietists.

The chief theological problem with this omission is that Christ's

51. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988), Appendix C: "Comprehensive Redemption: A Theology for Social Action."

52. Toon, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

resurrection and ascension were historical. The proof of Christ's definitive conquest over both sin and Satan were His resurrection (I Cor. 15) and His ascension (Eph. 4:8–10). Paul appealed to the doctrine of Christ's ascension to make his case for *the church's corporate progressive sanctification in history*. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12–13). Amillennialism and premillennialism place in history Christ's definitive perfection and dominion. They place His final dominion at the end of history. Then what of Christ's progressive dominion? For pessimillennialism, there is none for the church, only for Satan's kingdom. Satan achieves this representatively through the disinherited sons of Adam. Christ does not achieve this representatively through His adopted sons.

This is why amillennialism and premillennialism are *asymmetric theologies*. Their theology of covenantal representation applies to Satan and his kingdom, but not to Christ and His kingdom. Both of these eschatologies affirm that Satan rules representatively, exercising dominion in history through his disciples, whereas Christ, having achieved definitive victory in history over Satan through His resurrection, suffers post-ascension historical defeat representatively through his ever-besieged church. Christ can achieve cultural victory only by ruling in person, whereas Satan has achieved cultural victory without ruling in person. For the amillennialist and the premillennialist, cultural dominion in church history is a contest whose rules are rigged in favor of Satan: "Heads, Satan wins; tails, Christ loses." What works for Satan fails for Christ: *representative rule*. Yet Jesus taught that the two kingdoms are so similar that the wheat and the tares must coexist side by side until the end of time (Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43).[53]

By restricting Christ's kingship to the institutional church—Christ the Priest—and by involving Him in the suffering of his people—again, Christ the Priest—and by confining His rulership to the final judgment, *Toon stripped Jesus the King of His reign, His kingdom, and His cultural authority in history*. All pietists do this, but Toon was more self-conscious than most.

Toon was not ignorant. He was familiar with Anglo-American church history and historical theology. He knew that the many of

53. Gary North, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [2000] 2012), ch. 29.

the Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians were postmillennialists. Although he did not mention any of his books on Puritanism in the list of published books that appears in his book on the ascension, he was the author of *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel* (1970). It is a book on postmillennialism.

Toon self-consciously replaced the concept of the Great Commission, which governs everything under heaven, with pietism's world of suffering redeemed sinners who cling to each other inside besieged local churches, and who pray for the return of Christ with His angels to overcome their culturally dominant and increasingly antagonistic covenantal enemies. Toon had no concept of Jesus as the king of culture because he rejects any concept of the kingdom of God as manifesting itself outside the institutional church (and perhaps the Christian family—he did not say). The implication of his theology of the ascension is that the ascension has produced a world in which Christianity possesses less cultural authority in history than Old Testament Israel lawfully possessed.

Toon has an eschatological agenda: to promote cultural retreat as God's holy way of living. He ends his book by citing Colossians 3:1–5.

> If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Toon says that this passage should govern our thoughts in the present world. Why this passage? Why not the Great Commission? Because Christianity is inevitably losing the cultural and intellectual war. "As the process of secularization continues, and as the success of modern science and technology condition us to be merely this-worldly in our thinking, we need to follow the advice which Paul have to the church of Colossae."[54] In short, secularism should not be resisted by the Christians' development of a comprehensive counter-culture based on the Bible. No, it is to be resisted only by righteous individual living. By citing this particular Pauline passage, he offers an agenda for dominion that boils down to this: just stop fornicating. This, for Toon, constituted the essence of the visible cultural man-

54. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

ifestation of the kingdom of God in history, the most that we can legitimately expect in history from the Great Commission. This, or something like it, is the conclusion of all forms of pessimillennialism.

This is pietism's worldview. It leads to legalism. And then, in Christians' legitimate reaction to legalism, it can lead to an illegitimate licentiousness. Both positions are antinomian with respect to God's Bible-revealed law, Old and New Testaments.

The theological answer to pietism's permanent dualism of legalism and licentiousness is covenant theology, which has what pietism does not: a doctrine of the kingdom of God as a civilization, not just a list of prohibited individual sins.

E. The Location of Kingdom Headquarters

The eschatological issue of headquarters should not be ignored. God's headquarters are in heaven. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9–10). Man's headquarters are on earth.

Heaven does not come down to earth in history. Jesus did—once. After His ascension, His place of judgment is at the right hand of God, where He makes intercession on behalf of His people (Rom. 8:34). The throne of grace is not on earth or in history. So, headquarters cannot be on earth or in history. This is equally true of Satan's kingdom, which premillennialists believe. Satan exercises dominion in history from beyond history. But Jesus doesn't, they teach.

The premillennialist associates Christ's dominion in history only with His bodily presence, not with His reign from on high. His reign from on high produces only cultural defeat in history for His representatives, both amillennialism and premillennialism teach. They do not relate Peter's words regarding Christ's location in heaven to His parallel dominion in history: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (I Peter 3:22).

Paul described our battles in history as battles against these supernatural powers. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). These are the supernatural powers that Christ, through His

bodily resurrection, definitively defeated. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:13–15). Despite this, pessimillennialism teaches that these Satanic powers, which were definitively defeated by Christ in his resurrection, cannot be progressively defeated in history by Christ's pincer movement: power from His heavenly throne and power from His earthly church.

Eden was to serve Adam as his headquarters in the conquest of the world: the dominion covenant.[55] Adam was forcibly removed from headquarters after his rebellion. Headquarters for Noah was the ark, but only for a few months. After that, geography played no role until Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees. Ur could not serve as headquarters for Abraham; no place else could, either. Abraham wandered. After him, Israel wandered. Geographical headquarters was re-established only with Israel's conquest of Canaan. But the same threat existed for Israel as had existed for Adam, as Deuteronomy constantly warns: *removal from headquarters*. This happened at the time of the first exile, and then culminated with the removal of geographical headquarters with the fall of Jerusalem.

Dispensational premillennialists assume that headquarters will be reestablished in Jerusalem by Jesus when He returns to set up His earthly kingdom.[56] Historic premillennialists remain silent regarding the place of earthly headquarters during the premillennial kingdom. Amillennialists and postmillennialists insist that kingdom headquarters in history has been transferred to heaven. Postmillennialists teach that this transfer will have visible cultural results in history: the progressive defeat of Satan's kingdom. Amillennialists also teach that this transfer will have visible cultural results in history: the progressive victory of Satan's kingdom.

With the transfer of God's kingdom to the replacement nation of the church (Matt. 21:43; 28:18–20), earthly headquarters no longer exist, even as an ideal. This has been a major transformation by the

55. North, *Sovereignty and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Genesis* (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, 2012), chaps. 3, 4.

56. While this is almost universally believed by dispensationalists, the movement's theologians have rarely mentioned it.

New Covenant. The church is decentralized. There are no biblically mandated international festivals. There are no international headquarters. While the Roman Catholic Church likes to think that it occupies international headquarters in the Vatican, as manifested by the Pope's authority, this faith was definitively shattered by its inability to enforce sanctions against the Eastern Church in 1054 and then against Luther after 1517. The Vatican after 1965 did not enforce effective discipline on the visible army of heretics who filled the church's seminaries, let alone the army of homosexuals who filled its pulpits. Its official proclamation of cultural authority may not be as devoid of visible evidence as Engelsma's standard of Christian cultural victory is, but it is close, and with respect to the sexual preferences of its ordained ministers, it is in even worse shape.

Conclusion

The law of God teaches that covenant-keeping will produce dominion in history for God's covenant people (Deut. 28:1–14). The issue of biblical law (point three) is tied to the issue of sanctions (point four) in history and therefore to eschatology (point five). This is why theonomy is necessarily postmillennial. This is a package deal. Biblical law's system of sanctions unbreakably connects point three and point five.

The attack on biblical law is an attack on point four: the law's sanctions, above all, civil sanctions. It is also an attack on point five: cultural dominion by covenant-keepers in history. This is why amillennialism and premillennialism are inherently pietistic. They denigrate Christianity's victory in history because they denigrate God's law. They denigrate God's law because they deny the law's historical sanctions, which produce cultural dominance for God's people. Denying this eschatological outcome, they must dismiss God's Bible-revealed law and its mandated civil sanctions as Old Testament intrusions into the history of the covenant. This dismissal delivers them into the hands of one or another system of anti-biblical law, which means anti-biblical ethics.

APPENDIX J

CATEGORIES OF THE MOSAIC LAW

This appendix appeared originally in the Conclusion to my book, *Leviticus: An Economic Commentary* (1994), pages 637–45. I have here retained the footnote references in that chapter. All of these laws are found in Leviticus, but they provide opportunities for Bible commentators and Christian ethicists to search for fundamental principles of interpretation for dealing with the Mosaic ordinances.

A. Land Laws and Seed Laws

Land laws and seed laws were laws associated with God's covenantal promises to Abraham regarding his offspring (Gen. 15–17). There was a chronological boundary subsequently placed on the seed laws: Jacob's prophecy and promise. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). After Shiloh came, Jacob said, the scepter would depart from Judah. The unified concept of *scepter and lawgiver* pointed to the civil covenant: physical sanctions and law. Jacob prophesied that the lawful enforcement of the civil covenant would eventually pass to another ruler: Shiloh, the Messiah.

The Levitical land laws were tied covenantally to the Abrahamic promise regarding a place of residence for the Israelites (Gen. 15:13–16). These land laws were also tied to the Abrahamic promise of the seed. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18). The mark of those included under the boundaries of these seed laws was the covenantal sign of circumcision (Gen. 17:9–14). Circumcision established a personal covenantal boundary. There were also family and tribal boundaries tied to

the laws of inheritance. The ultimate inheritance law was above all a land law: the jubilee law (Lev. 25).

The fall of Jerusalem and the abolition of the temple's sacrifices forever ended the Mosaic Passover. The five sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 also ended forever. There can be no question about the annulment of the inheritance laws by A.D. 70. *But with this annulment of the inheritance laws also came the annulment of the seed laws*. Once the Messiah came, there was no further need to separate Judah from his brothers. Once the temple was destroyed, there was no further need to separate Levi from his brothers. There was also no further need to separate the sons of Aaron (priests) from the sons of Levi (Levites). Therefore, the most important Mosaic family distinction within a single tribe—the Aaronic priesthood—was annulled: the ultimate representative case. *The tribal and family boundaries of the Abrahamic covenant ceased to operate after A.D. 70*. This annulled the Mosaic law's applications of the Abrahamic covenant's land and seed laws. The land and seed laws were aspects of a single administration: the Mosaic Covenant. The New Covenant—based exclusively and forthrightly on the covenantal concept of adoption[1]—replaced the Mosaic Covenant.

By dividing the Mosaic law into land laws, seed laws, priestly laws, and cross-boundary laws, we can assess which laws are still binding in the New Covenant, and which are not.

1. Land Laws

Biblical quarantine (Lev. 13:45–46). This law dealt with a unique disease that came upon men as a judgment. Only when a priest crossed the household boundary of a diseased house did everything within its walls become unclean. This quarantine law ended when this judicial disease ended when the Mosaic priesthood ended.[2]

Promised land as a covenantal agent (Lev. 18:24–29). The land no longer functions as a covenantal agent. That temporary office was operational only after the Israelites crossed into Canaan. That office was tied to the presence of the sanctuary[3]

1. Infant baptism is not a confirmation of covenantal inheritance through biological inclusion but rather its opposite: the confirmation of covenantal inheritance through adoption, i.e., adoption into the family of God, His church. The one who baptizes is an agent of the church, not an agent of the family. This was true under the Abrahamic covenant, too: the male head of the household circumcised the males born into that household, but as an agent of the priesthood.

2. Gary North, *Boundaries and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Leviticus*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, Georgia: Point Five Press, [1984] 2012), ch. 9.

3. *Ibid*., ch. 10.

The laws of clean and unclean beasts (Lev. 20:22–26). This was a land law, for it was associated with the land's office as the agent of sanctions. These laws marked off Israel as a separate nation. This is true of the dietary laws generally, which is why God annulled them in a vision to Peter just before he was told to visit the house of Cornelius (Acts 10).[4]

The national sabbatical year of rest for the land (Lev. 25:1–7). This was an aspect of the jubilee year. The law was part of God's original grant of leaseholds at the time of the conquest. There is no agency of enforcement today. There has been no national grant of land.[5]

The jubilee law (Lev. 25:8–13). This law applied only to national Israel. It was a law uniquely associated with Israel's conquest of Canaan. It was in part a land law and in part a seed law: inheritance and citizenship. It was more judicial—citizenship—than economic. The annulment of the jubilee law was announced by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:17–19). This prophecy was fulfilled at the final jubilee year of national Israel.[6] This probably took place in the year that Paul's ministry to the gentiles began, two years after the crucifixion.[7]

The jubilee law prohibiting oppression centered around the possibility that the priests and magistrates might not enforce the jubilee law (Lev. 25:14–17). Thus, those who trusted the courts when leasing land would be oppressed by those who knew the courts were corrupt.[8]

The jubilee year was to be preceded by a miraculous year bringing a triple crop (Lev. 25:18–22). This designates the jubilee year law as a land law with a blessing analogous to the manna. The manna had ceased when the nation crossed the Jordan River and entered Canaan.[9]

The prohibition against the permanent sale of rural land (Lev. 25:23–24). This was a land law. It was an aspect of the conquest of Canaan: the original land grant. This law did not apply in walled cities that were not Levitical cities.[10]

The law promising rain, crops, peace in the land, and no wild beasts in response to corporate faithfulness (Lev. 26:3–6). This was a land law. Na-

4. *Ibid.*, ch. 21.
5. *Ibid.*, ch. 23.
6. *Ibid.*, ch. 24.
7. James Jordan, "Jubilee (3)," *Biblical Chronology*, V (April 1993), [p. 2].
8. North, *Boundaries and Dominion*, ch. 25.
9. *Ibid.*, ch. 26.
10. *Ibid.*, ch. 27.

ture's predictable covenantal blessings were tied to the office of the holy land as the agency of sanctions.[11]

2. Seed Laws

Gleaning (Lev. 19:9–10). The gleaning law applied only to national Israel, and only to farming. It was a means of establishing a major form of charity in tribe-dominated rural regions. This law promoted localism and decentralization in Mosaic Israel. The moral principle of gleaning extends into New Covenant times as a charity law, but not as a seed law. The principle is this: *recipients of charity who can work hard should*. This law is not supposed to be applied literally. There were no applications in civil law. This law was enforced by the priesthood, not by the state, for no corporate negative sanctions were threatened by God, nor would it have been possible for judges to identify precisely which poor people had been unlawfully excluded.[12] This principle of interpretation also applies to the re-statement of the gleaning law in Leviticus 23:22.[13]

The laws against allowing different breeds of cattle to interbreed (Lev. 19:19). This was a temporary seed law. It reflected the laws of tribal separation. So did the law against sewing a field with mixed seeds. Also annulled is the prohibition against wearing wool-linen garments.[14]

The law against harvesting the fruit of newly planted trees for three years and setting aside the fourth year's crop as holy (Lev. 19:23–25). This was a seed law. It was a curse on Israel because of the failure of the exodus generation to circumcise their sons during the wilderness wandering. It is no longer in force.[15]

The law governing the enslavement of fellow Israelites (Lev. 25:39–43). This was a seed law, although by being governed by the jubilee law, there was an aspect of land law associated with it. There is no longer any long-term indentured servitude bringing a family under the authority of another family for up to 49 years.[16]

The law governing the permanent enslavement of foreigners (Lev. 25:44–46). This must have been a seed law rather than a land law, for it opened the possibility of adoption, either by the family that owned the foreign slaves or by another Israelite family.[17]

11. *Ibid.*, ch. 33.
12. *Ibid.*, ch. 11.
13. *Ibid.*, ch. 22.
14. *Ibid.*, ch. 17.
15. *Ibid.*, ch. 18.
16. *Ibid.*, ch. 30.
17. *Ibid.*, ch. 31.

The law governing the redemption of an Israelite out of a foreigner's household by the kinsman-redeemer (Lev. 25:47–55). This was a seed law.[18]

B. Priestly Laws

The laws of five sacrifices (Lev. 1–7). These were all priestly laws. They are no longer in force.[19]

The law prohibiting wine drinking by priests while inside the tabernacle or temple (Lev. 10:8–11). This law was exclusive to priests as mediatorial agents. The wine belonged to God; it had to be poured out before the altar. This law was tied to the holiness of the temple. It did not apply to Levites or priests outside of the temple's geographical boundaries.[20]

The law establishing the official prices of people who take vows (Lev. 27:2–8). This was a law governing access to the priesthood. These vows governed those who were devoted—irrevocably adopted—to priestly service.[21]

The law establishing vows to priests and the inheritance of rural land (Lev. 27:9–15). This law was primarily priestly but secondarily a seed law: an aspect of inheritance. This law placed the negative sanction of disinheritance on those who vowed to support a priest through the productivity of a dedicated plot of land and then refused to honor the vow. The land went from being dedicated to devoted: beyond redemption.[22]

C. Cross-Boundary Laws

Cross-boundary laws are still in force under the New Covenant. These are properly designated as Deuteronomy 4 laws: designed by God to bring men to repentance through the testimony of civil justice within a holy commonwealth.

Fraud and false dealing (Lev. 19:11–12). The laws against theft still prevail. They had no unique association with either the land or the promised seed.[23]

The law against robbing an employee by paying him later than the end of the working day (Lev. 19:13). This law protects the weakest parties from unfair competition: the ability to wait to be paid.

18. *Ibid.*, ch. 32.
19. *Ibid.*, chaps. 1–7.
20. *Ibid.*, ch. 8.
21. *Ibid.*, ch. 36.
22. *Ibid.*, ch. 37.
23. *Ibid.*, ch. 12.

The law against tripping the blind man and cursing the deaf man (Lev. 19:14). The weaker parties are to be protected by civil law.[24]

The prohibition against enforcing laws that discriminate in terms of wealth or power (Lev. 19:15). This law had no unique association with Israel's land or seed laws. Its theological presupposition is that God is not a respecter of persons: a theological principle upheld in both covenants.[25]

The prohibition against personal vengeance (Lev. 19:18). This establishes the civil government as God's monopoly agency of violence.[26]

The law prohibiting judicial discrimination against strangers in the land (non-citizens) (Lev. 19:33–36). This law an aspect of the just weights law. Laws governing justice were not land-based or seed-based.[27]

The law against offering a child to Molech (Lev. 20:2–5). This was a law governed by the principle of false worship, although it appears to be a seed law (inheritance) or perhaps a land law (agricultural blessings). It had to do with identifying the source of *positive sanctions* in history: either God or a false god. God's name is holy: *sanctified*.[28] This will never change.

The jubilee law prohibiting taking interest from poor fellow believers or resident aliens (Lev. 25:35–38). This law was an extension of Exodus 22:25. It was included in the jubilee code, but it was not derived from that code. In non-covenanted, non-Trinitarian nations, however, Christians are the resident aliens. Thus, the resident alien aspect of the law is annulled until such time as nations formally covenant under God.[29]

The law promising fruitfulness and multiplication of seed (Lev. 26: 9–10). This law was covenantal, not tied to the holy land or the tribal structure of inheritance. It was a confessional law, but because of its universal promise, it was a common grace law.[30]

Negative corporate sanctions (Lev. 26:13–17). These were promised to Israel, but they were not tied to either the holy land or the promised seed. The governing issue was the fear of God, which is still in force.[31]

The law of the tithe that applied to animals passing under a rod (Lev. 27:30–37). This law still applies, though it is no longer very import-

24. *Ibid.*, ch. 13.
25. *Ibid.*, ch. 14.
26. *Ibid.*, ch. 16.
27. *Ibid.*, ch. 19.
28. *Ibid.*, ch. 20.
29. *Ibid.*, ch. 29.
30. *Ibid.*, ch. 34.
31. *Ibid.*, ch. 35.

ant in a non-agricultural setting. God still prohibits individuals from structuring tithes in kind (goods) from pre-collection rearrangements that favor the tither.[32]

D. The Traditional Categories

The traditional definition of the Mosaic laws as moral, ceremonial, and civil does not do justice to the judicial distinctions within the Moral law-order. This traditional classification system attempts to place a judicial barrier against any extension into the New Covenant of the Mosaic civil laws and ceremonial laws, while avoiding the pitfalls of antinomianism by affirming the continuing validity of the moral law. The problem with this traditional judicial hermeneutic is that the moral law, apart from specific Mosaic case laws *and their Bible-mandated required civil sanctions*, invariably has become intermixed with some version of paganism's natural law theory.

My approach has been, first, to identify the priestly laws that were annulled by Christ's ministry as the high priest, and the transformation of the priesthood from Levitical to Mechizedekal. The key New Testament document in this regard is the Epistle to the Hebrews. It sets forth this hermeneutical rule: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). Second, I have looked for evidence of a Mosaic law's inextricable relationship with the land, which had to do with the maintenance of tribal boundaries. Third, I have looked for evidence of a law's indissoluble connection with landed inheritance: seed laws. The seed laws and land laws often overlap.

The fourth category, cross-boundary laws, correspond to what is traditionally called the moral law. But the phrase "moral law" sometimes has the connotation of not being an aspect of justice, especially civil justice. Rarely if ever do defenders of the category of moral law connect this moral law to the Mosaic law's mandated historical sanctions, especially civil sanctions. This view of the moral law transforms the moral law into exclusively self-disciplined law. This is the view of biblical law defended by pietists and secular humanists, who are united in their desire to restrict all biblical injunctions to the human conscience, where they possess no civil authority. This is the agenda, less and less hidden, of modern defenders of the category of biblical moral law. Those defenders who are not pietists are generally embar-

32. *Ibid.*, ch. 38.

rassed by the severity of the Mosaic law's civil sanctions, especially in matters sexual.

There are also defenders of biblical moral law who have another agenda: to gain moral legitimacy for programs of state-mandated economic reform that were not mandated by the Mosaic law, and which may even be prohibited by the Mosaic law, all in the name of biblical justice. They invoke the moral law in the civil realm, but deliberately neglect or reject the specific context of a particular law. A familiar example of this political strategy is the invocation of the jubilee laws. The reformers insist that Christians must defend state programs of compulsory wealth redistribution in the name of these laws. Yet they refuse to acknowledge that the jubilee laws were aspects of genocide: Israel's mandated extermination of all of the residents of Canaan. They also refuse to acknowledge that these laws applied only to rural land and houses owned by Levites inside Levitical cities. They shout "liberation," but then mumble about not applying the jubilee laws literally. Here is an example of this strategy of deception. William Peltz, the Midwest regional coordinator of the Peoples Bicentennial Commission, at a meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, argued that conservative Christians can be turned into promoters of revolutionary politics if the revolutionaries can show them that the Bible teaches revolution. He then cited Leviticus 25, the chapter that contains the Jubilee land laws.[33] This tactic has subsequently become a popular theme of numerous radical Christians, including Ron Sider[34] and *Sojourners* magazine. The reformers have not bothered to tell their followers that if Leviticus 25 is still morally and legally binding, then lifetime slavery is still morally and legally valid, for it is only in Leviticus 25 that the Hebrews were told that they could buy and enslave foreigners for life, and then enslave their heirs forever (Lev. 25:44–46).[35] I wrote my book, *Is the World Running Down?* (1988),[36] to challenge the misuse of Scripture in supporting various socialist schemes.

33. *The Attempt to Steal the Bicentennial, The Peoples Bicentennial Commission*, Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 94th Congress, Second Session (March 17 and 18, 1976), p. 36.

34. David Chilton, *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators: A Biblical Response to Ronald J. Sider*, 3rd ed. (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, [1985] 1996).

35. North, *Leviticus*, ch. 31.

36. Gary North, *Is the World Running Down? Crisis in the Christian Worldview* (Tyler, Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1988).

Conclusion

To understand a Mosaic law, you must first understand its context. Was it a land law, a seed law, a priestly law, or a cross-boundary law? If it was one of the first three, you must then determine whether the New Testament has in some way adopted and adapted it to fit the New Covenant order. An example would be gleaning. This was clearly a land law, yet it may possess underlying moral principles that can assist Christians in the kingdom work of transforming society. The gleaning laws set forth the relationship between charity and hard work. The task of application—casuistry—should begin only after a Mosaic law has been assigned to one of the four categories.